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SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 2026 · $4

Cassidy supports Blanche for AG post

Path appears clear for nominee to lead the Justice Department

BY JEREMY ROEBUCK AND THEODORIC MEYER

Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-Louisiana) said Friday that he will vote to confirm Todd Blanche as attorney general, giving President Donald Trump's pick to lead the Justice Department the last expected vote he needs to be approved by the full Senate.

Cassidy made the announcement on the Senate floor just hours after Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, another critical GOP vote, said she would oppose Blanche's nomination. Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) announced earlier this week that she would also be voting no.

But with Cassidy's support now in hand, the Senate's Republican leadership is expected to move forward with a vote on Blanche's confirmation after weeks in which the acting attorney general's prospects appeared to be in doubt.

With all Democrats expected to oppose Blanche and Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Kentucky) absent for health reasons, a no vote by Cassidy would at minimum have forced an embarrassing delay in the full Senate's confirmation vote.

Cassidy said Friday he shared concerns raised by Murkowski and Collins over the "politicization" of the Justice Department under Trump and the controversial deal Blanche oversaw this

SEE **BLANCHE** ON **A4**

Some vets went along with scams of GI Bill

Prosecutors rarely pursued those in it only for housing subsidies

BY CRAIG WHITLOCK AND ANDREW BA TRAN

SAN DIEGO — At Blue Star Learning, a vocational school that defrauded taxpayers of $29 million in GI Bill funds, learning was not the point.

Over four years, more than 1,100 military veterans packed Blue Star Learning's classrooms next to a Jack in the Box fast-food joint here, ostensibly to learn basic computer skills. In reality, most enrolled just to collect a GI Bill housing allowance of about $3,000 per month, according to court documents and law enforcement records obtained by The Washington Post as part of a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit.

Veterans logged 18 hours in class a week to conjure the illusion that they were full-time students entitled to housing subsidies. Most spent the time snoozing, scrolling through YouTube or "just hanging out," Justin Foose, Blue Star Learning's former admissions director, told federal agents.

SEE **SCHOOLS** ON **A7**

Revving up for racing

CHRISTINE KAO/THE WASHINGTON POST

Construction goes on Friday in preparation for the Freedom 250 Grand Prix, which will be held on Aug. 22-23 on a 1.7-mile course along the National Mall. The IndyCar event is part of the celebration of the nation's 250th anniversary.

The cost of the Iran war to taxpayers is mounting

Lawmakers are haggling over how to pay the bill for the conflict

BY SAMMY WESTFALL

As the U.S. approaches six months of war with Iran, the costs to taxpayers and consumers continue to grow, beyond what has yet been fully quantified.

Lawmakers are wrangling over a plan to pay the bill. Consumers face bills of their own, including gas prices driven up by supply disruptions during the war. And people around the world face shortages and higher prices, some connected to Iran's effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz to commercial shipping — as U.S. allies press for a deal to open it.

U.S. officials are warning of a Pentagon funding crunch and extreme munition shortages that pushed President Donald Trump to clash with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth last week, The Washington Post reported.

Here is what we know so far about the costs of the war.

Military costs

"It takes money to kill bad guys," Hegseth told reporters in March.

The war began on Feb. 28 with a joint U.S. and Israeli attack on Iranian targets. By September, the military will have incurred some $37.5 billion in taxpayer-funded costs in connection to the war, excluding the cost of damage to U.S. bases in the region struck Iran, according to Hegseth's latest estimate, which he offered at a hearing last month in which he pushed lawmakers to approve $67 billion in additional funding to cover the expense of the conflict, including replenishment of some weapons stocks.

The House late last month approved some $73 billion for the Iran war, not all of which would go to the Defense Department, and the Republican-controlled Senate is rushing to approve it, along with a stopgap spending measure, before leaving Washington for summer recess meant to begin Friday.

House Republicans on July 22 passed a $1.15 trillion defense policy bill and created a $95 billion budget plan that would provide some $73 billion in military and indigence funding, as well as relief for farmers, among other measures.

Some analysts, based on their own calculations or projections, put the cost of the war higher than Pentagon estimates.

Mark F. Cancian of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank, put out an estimate in June of a cost of $35.2 —$42.5 billion for the war, counting only additional costs incurred by the Department of Defense due to the war, as many operational activities are already baked into the

SEE **IRAN** ON **A18**

Trump digs in on ballroom legal fight

SAYS HE'LL APPEAL TO SUPREME COURT

Lower court ruling orders halt to work on pet project

BY DAN DIAMOND AND JONATHAN EDWARDS

President Donald Trump on Friday said that he would ask the Supreme Court to allow him to resume building his planned White House ballroom, after an appeals court ruled he had exceeded his authority by demolishing part of the mansion and beginning construction without congressional approval.

"We will be immediately appealing to the United States Supreme Court," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform, reiterating his argument that the planned addition, which he has pegged at $400 million, is needed to protect him and future presidents. "This unjust decision must be overturned by the Supreme Court in its entirety."

In a 2-1 decision earlier Friday, a three-judge panel at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit sided with a federal judge's April ruling requiring construction to halt until Congress expressly authorizes the project.

"Each President is a temporary tenant, not the owner, of the White House and its Executive Residence," Judges Patricia A. Millett and Bradley N. Garcia wrote in their majority opinion.

They stayed their ruling for 14 days to allow the White House to appeal to the Supreme Court.

Trump relied on private donations to begin the project without seeking an appropriation from Congress, touting the arrangement as a boon to taxpayers. But the courts have found that private financing did not allow him to bypass the separate requirement that Congress authorize major changes to the White House grounds.

Trump announced the 90,000-square-foot addition last year and swiftly demolished the

SEE **BALLROOM** ON **A5**

CHALINEE THIRASUPA/REUTERS

Tragedy in Thailand

The wife and family members of one of the five teachers and staff members killed during a school shooting in Thailand on Friday are consoled. The shooter also killed his two grandparents. **Story, A13.**

23,000 jobs were shed in July's hiring slump

Labor Department data show job growth slowing since April

BY LAUREN KAORI GURLEY

Hiring fell unexpectedly in July as U.S. employers shed 23,000 jobs, a surprising show of weakness in an economy battered by tariffs, elevated inflation and the ongoing war in Iran.

The unemployment rate ticked down to 4.1 last month, continuing a years-long streak of low joblessness, according to Labor Department data released Friday. But the decline was due largely to workers exiting the job market: An ongoing wave of retirements helped push the share of Americans working or looking for work to its lowest level since February 2021.

Data for June and May also were revised down by a combined 103,000 jobs, suggesting that the labor market has been weakening more than previously thought. For July, forecasters had expected gains of about 80,000 jobs; instead, last month brought the first negative job growth since Trump launched attacks on Iran in February, disrupting global oil markets and raising prices at the pump.

In addition to the war's elevated gas prices, high inflation, advancements in artificial intelligence and President Donald Trump's push to raise tariffs and restrict immigration may be taking a toll, economists said. Though companies enjoying Trump's tax cuts accelerated their hiring in the first six months of this year to about 75,000 jobs per month — up from about 15,000 new positions per month last year — that momentum could be ending.

"The labor market has to fight a lot of headwinds to keep going," said Guy Berger, director of economic research at the Burning Glass Institute, a Philadelphia think tank that studies the labor market. Citing the impact

SEE **JOBS** ON **A11**

IN THE NEWS

New danger zones As wildfires have become more frequent and intense, places like Spokane, Washington — communities that once rarely burned — are more vulnerable. **A2**

Smoke threatens the unborn Wildfire smoke is a growing danger to pregnant women and unborn babies, a study finds. **A5**

THE NATION

In a competitive Texas Senate race, the economy rather than abortion is on center stage. A11

A suspended Catholic priest in Grenada turned to calypso to preach about sexual abuse and Gaza. A18

THE WORLD

The Senate on Friday overwhelmingly approved a bill to intensify sanctions on Russia's wartime economy, in a long-awaited victory for congressional supporters of Ukraine. A13

THE ECONOMY

The Trump administration has refunded $100 billion in tariffs, with major corporations getting hundreds of millions of dollars back, records show. However, most American households won't see any of the refund money directly. A10

STYLE

A small organ in eastern Germany will play one composition until 2640. It's redefining how slowly music can be played. B1

SPORTS

Stefon Diggs, a native of the Washington area, was thrilled to sign with the Commanders. B7

THE REGION

At least 230 Black boys died at the House of Reformation and Instruction for Colored Children, a segregated juvenile jail in Maryland with a documented history of abuse and neglect. Their families want answers — and justice. **B13**

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CORRECTIONS

• An article that appeared in the Aug. 7 Weekend section, offering advice for parents on media for children, said that Common Sense Media's age recommendation for the movie "One Night Only" was 16 and older. Common Sense later revised its age recommendation for "Onen Night Only" to 15 and older.
• An Aug. 6 A-section article about a Senate confirmation process incorrectly said incoming Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Erica Schwartz is a retired Navy rear admiral. She is a retired rear admiral in the the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps.

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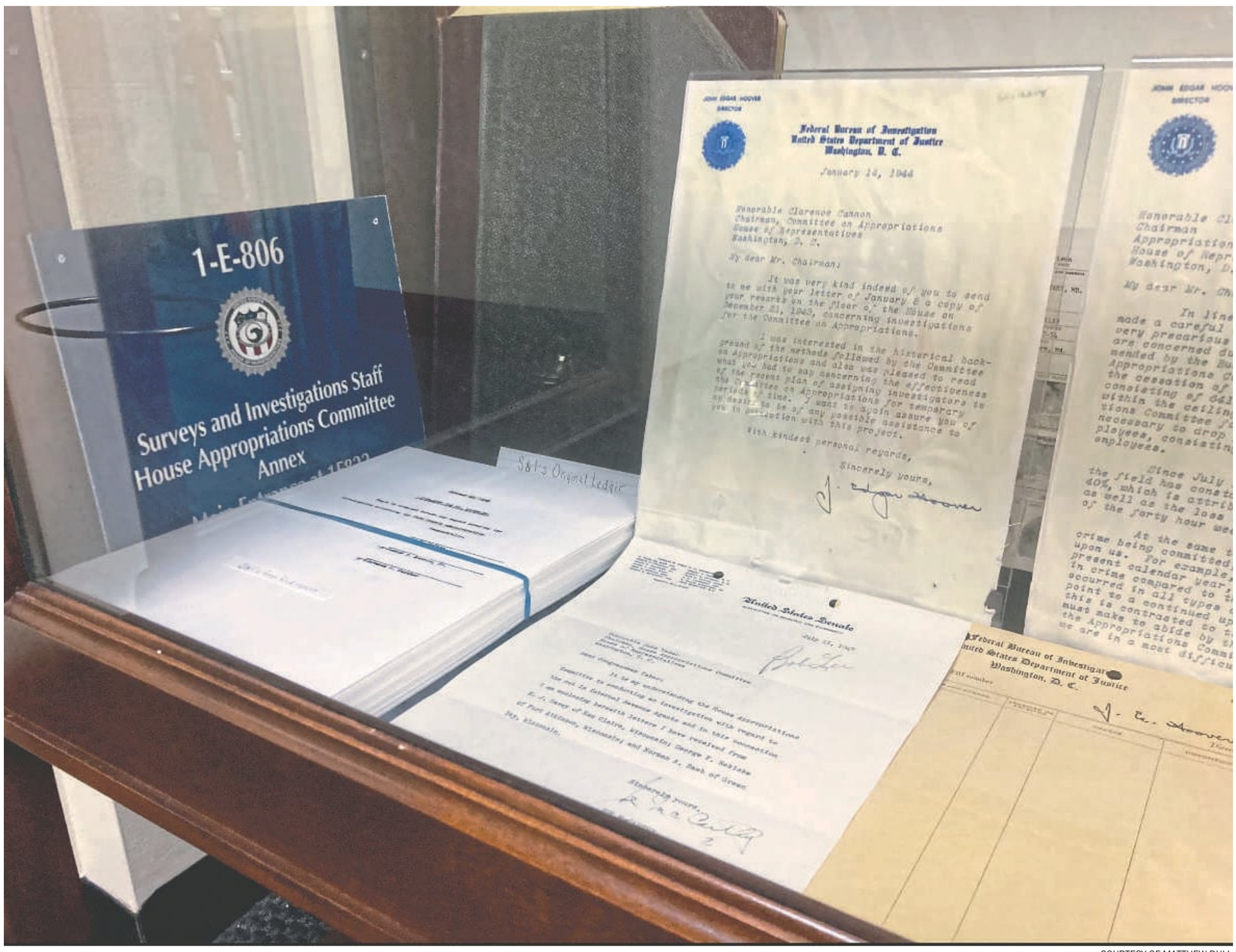

COURTESY OF MATTHEW DULL

Virginia Tech professor Matthew Dull provided to The Washington Post this photo he said he took in 2024 at the Ford House Office Building. The display case, he said, held papers produced by a secretive U.S. House team that investigated federal spending over eight decades. A complete archive of the group's work is missing.

Decades of missing spending investigation documents sought

Watchdogs press House panel over more than 80 years of work

BY MARIANA ALFARO

For 81 years, a secretive team inside the House Appropriations Committee investigated how federal agencies spent the public's money — military construction costs, Agriculture Department contracts, children's television funded by the Education Department.

The team produced hundreds of reports detailing the ways the U.S. government funded American life across decades — a rich trove of information experts say could help study successful federal spending, as well as fraud and abuse, in the nation's key government programs, and military and infrastructure projects during the 20th century.

The problem is, a complete archive of the team's findings is missing, and no one with the Appropriations Committee will say where it went.

"These records, in particular, shed really important light into the operations of Congress and how the Appropriations Committee has changed the course of history," said Dan Schuman, executive director of the American Governance Institute (AGI). "We want this information to be available so that people can understand what appropriators have done and how it shaped some of most pivotal battles inside the legislative branch."

Known as Surveys and Investigations, the team was created in 1943 and was staffed by a rotating cast of FBI investigators alongside federal agency experts and, at times, analysts from the Government Accountability Office. S&I, as it was known, was quietly disbanded in 2024. While House rules say most congressional records that old should be open to the public by now, experts say that the committee did not completely file the records with the National Archives, as mandated by House rules.

On Friday, a group of 15 government watchdog groups and experts, led by Schuman and the AGI, sent a letter asking that Appropriations Committee leaders provide assurance that the records were properly preserved.

Only bits and pieces of the S&I records have been made public, largely due to the work of Matthew Dull, a professor at Virginia Tech's Center for Public Administration and Policy. For years, Dull has worked with an archivist seeking out these reports, often finding them in public and private libraries, agencies, archives and reading rooms. The professor has identified about 2,000 study titles, but a complete archive of S&I's work is missing, and the committee's leaders have not explained why.

Dull, who signed Schuman's letter, said up to 60 percent of the studies he's been able to account for focus on military expenses, while the rest touch on issues as varied as Interior Department geological surveys, Department of Agriculture solid waste removal prices and Education Department school infrastructure costs.

The professor maintains an online archive of the S&I investigations he's found, but most reports have never been publicly accounted for.

"The rules of the House say that the committee turns over everything at the end of the Congress to the clerk," Dull said, but "they did not, in general, turn over copies of those reports to the clerk."

Dull provided The Washington Post with photographs he said he took of a room at the Ford House Office Building, one in 2024 and another in 2025. The first is of a display case that he said held some of the team's investigations and historical mementos of its work — showing that, at some point, at least some of the documents were being held in a Capitol office. He said the door to the other rooms in the office was locked, including that of a closet where he was told paper reports were housed. In the second photo, he said, the display case was gone and shelves in that closet were empty.

Spokespeople for both the Republican and Democratic leaders of the panel did not respond to multiple inquiries from The Post on the documents' location and whether they were properly stored away after S&I stopped producing new reports in 2024.

The House clerk, the House historian and the National Archives said they could not publicly comment on closed House records.

> *These records, in particular, shed really important light into the operations of Congress and how the Appropriations Committee has changed the course of history."*
>
> **Dan Schuman,** executive director of the American Governance Institute

The committee did not issue an official announcement marking the end of S&I in 2024. But over the past decade, S&I was tasked with fewer and fewer investigations, according to a list of reports Dull provided to The Post. Dull said a former S&I staffer told him that the last members of the team were let go as they were finishing a report on general provisions in December 2024.

S&I was started in 1943 by then-appropriations chairman Clarence Cannon, a powerful Democrat from Missouri who held the nation's purse strings tight. He received support from then-FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, who let bureau investigators take on S&I investigations, according to historical records.

A former S&I staffer who was brought onto the team in the 2010s to conduct an investigation — and who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they still work with the secretive sectors of the federal government — described the work as "pretty unique." The former staffer said that specialists from across the federal government were brought in to investigate how agencies spent money. The former staffer also said they understood that the investigations were kept secret because the Appropriations Committee wanted to remove any sense of bias or partisanship from their reports. Still, the former staffer argued that the public — or at least academics — should now be allowed to see S&I's decades-old work.

"The taxpayers paid to produce those documents," the former staffer said. "You paid 10 people for six months, that's a lot of money."

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THE NATION

LINDSEY WASSON/AP

Michelle Angstrom, left, hugs her husband, Wayne, as they survey the remains of their home in Spokane, Washington.

Washington state fires pushed far beyond familiar danger zones

Three blazes have burned more than 10,000 acres across Spokane

BY N. KIRKPATRICK, JOHN MUYSKENS AND MIRIAM WALDVOGEL

Michelle Angstrom expected she would cry when she returned to see what was left of her home, but she didn't. She stood there in her husband's arms looking at the smoldering ruins of the house she bought 20 years ago as a single mother of two.

The house was a reflection of the life she built. She had to start over again after her first marriage ended; building a career, raising her children. She had returned to the neighborhood where she grew up to give them what she experienced: a safe place off the beaten path where she could roam freely by bike.

The Angstroms were two hours north when they found out a fire threatened their home. Their dogs had stayed behind. The couple jumped quickly in the car and raced back to Spokane only to find they couldn't get past the road closures, despite their pleas.

As their house burned, so did Baby and Tinka.

As wildfires have become more frequent and intense, places like Spokane, Washington — communities that once rarely burned or that many people considered to be safe — are now more vulnerable. A cluster of three wildfires there have burned more than 10,000 acres across the city in total. The flames have damaged at least 931 structures and forced tens of thousands to evacuate over the past week.

Swaths of buildings in the three fires' perimeters fell into what has been considered "low" or "very low" hazard of fire, according to draft maps published July 1 from Washington's Department of Natural Resources.

The maps use large-fire simulation modeling to assess burn probability. When a building is earmarked as a low hazard, it would burn once in every 500 years. Very low hazard is once every 2,000 years.

Matthew Dehr, at the Department of Natural Resources said the data has limitations especially in dense urban areas: "There's a ton of variables that, really, we don't have good science on, and it's going to make it difficult to present an accurate picture of what the hazard actually is in some of those areas."

"We're in a new era of fighting these types of fires," said Dave Kokot, a retired fire marshal living in Spokane. "The word unprecedented, it really applies to this."

LINDSEY WASSON/AP

Louis Acosta looks through a toolbox at what remains of his father's house in Spokane.

DAVID RYDER/REUTERS

Smoke billows from the Old Trails Fire on Sunday. A day later, a man was arrested and charged with arson. The other two nearby blazes remain under investigation.

The Old Trails Fire, which burned Angstrom's home, has now spread to more than 3,500 acres. On Monday, a 37-year-old man was arrested and charged with arson.

Officials have not determined the cause of the other two fires.

Spokane sits in a combination of rolling foothills and forested areas, like Riverside State Park, which backs up onto many homes that burned. Eastern Washington is far drier than the temperate western part of the state, which is famously rainy because of its proximity to the ocean. Average annual rainfall in Spokane is only about 16 inches.

"It's a beautiful place to live because you're sort of embedded in nature. But when fires then happen in the forest, it's also then where people live," said Lauren Stachowiak, who studies fire history at Eastern Washington University near Spokane.

A red flag warning first prompted evacuations over the weekend, eventually forcing at least 65,000 people from their homes as smoke billowed and the fires spread.

"What those extreme warnings mean is, if a fire breaks out, we can't stop it," said Matthew Anderson, a professor of urban planning at Eastern Washington University. "Even if we had more resources, more personnel, more capacity, I still don't know if they would have been able to stop this sooner."

Gregory Ritchie, who owns and runs a media production business, already knew that traffic was bad. He had to help his sister, who recovered from Stage 4 cancer and needed her inhaler, evacuate her apartment. He rushed down Indian Trail Road to get her as flames rocked his vehicle from side to side.

He knew from his work that wildfires are unpredictable. He saw how the traffic was piling up when he arrived at her apartment.

"I was just very stern," he said. "We need to leave now, plain and simple."

After they rushed out the door and into the car, they quickly came to a stop and remained stuck in traffic for hours. There were only two ways out of the neighborhood.

"Here we go again," Kokot thought when he saw the weather forecast. In late June, a fire on the eastern side of the city put some 12,000 people under evacuation orders. In 2023, the Gray Fire destroyed about 200 homes in nearby Medical Lake. And in 2020, the Babb Road Fire burned about 80 percent of homes in Malden, a small town about 45 minutes south of Spokane.

But Kokot didn't expect that the Autumn Lane Fire, one of the three burning in Spokane, which put him on notice to evacuate, was going to move as quickly as it did.

Not everyone evacuated.

Alex Smith, 23, stayed behind. He said he was told to evacuate but stayed to document the devastation to his neighborhood on video. He was in the middle of the fire Saturday, surprised by how fast it spread.

"It seemed like it all happened at once," he said. "It was scary."

Al Acosta walked two miles past a road closure Monday afternoon to see what was left of his house of 40 years: a basketball hoop and a mailbox, with the mail still inside.

Acosta and his family looked through the still-smoldering ruins. There were metal frames of two recliners for him and his wife, Janice; skeletons of the refrigerator and the stove; and the bathtub, all sunk to the basement after the ground floor burned. The house's yellow walls, Acosta's shed and precious artwork from their son, Jesse, who died in 2016, were all gone.

"It probably wasn't a good idea for us to go, but my dad needed to see for himself," said Renee Stewart, Acosta's daughter.

Donna Light was away for the weekend with just her purse when the fire started burning. Her apartment was on the ground floor, its remains now mixed in with the rest of the complex.

She went back with her sister to salvage what she could, finding some of her jewelry and her Polish pottery collection.

"I saw that we were getting clumps of metal, like silver metal and gold metal," she said. "I realized later that that was probably the rest of my jewelry that I was looking for. I think they just kind of melted together."

Firefighters in Spokane are continuing efforts to contain the three fires before temperatures return to the high 90s this weekend. The National Weather Service has issued a red flag warning for Friday and Saturday, and wind gusts of up to 25 miles an hour are expected.

"Wind on a smoldering fire is always a point of concern," said Benjamin Cossel, a spokesperson for the federal team managing the Spokane fires. "We realize we are not out of the woods yet."

After Supreme Court ruling, Trump renews effort to fire Fed governor Cook

BY ANDREW ACKERMAN

President Donald Trump is restarting his effort to remove Lisa Cook from the Federal Reserve Board, about a month after he was blocked from doing so by the Supreme Court.

In a letter to Cook this week, the White House said the president was considering firing her from her position over unproven allegations that she engaged in mortgage fraud, reviving efforts that began last summer. It gave Cook 21 days to respond and directed her to submit any evidence or argument to the White House by Aug. 26.

Wednesday's letter, made public on Friday, follows a June Supreme Court ruling that said Cook was entitled to notice and some opportunity to respond before her attempted termination. Writing for the majority, Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. asserted that Congress gave the Fed a special status when it established it as an independent agency.

Trump signaled after the decision that he would soon revive the effort.

Abbe Lowell, an attorney for Cook, said that the allegations were "as baseless now as they were a year ago" and that they marked the latest effort to undermine the independence of the Fed.

"No matter what President Trump tries to do next, this much is clear under the facts and Supreme Court precedent — there is no valid cause for removing Governor Cook," he said in a statement. "As we did before, we will challenge this latest pretext and preserve her position and the historic role of the Fed."

A Fed spokesman declined to comment.

Trump is the first president in the Fed's 112-year history to try to fire one of the Fed's board members.

Last August, Trump alleged that Cook claimed two homes as primary residences to get a better mortgage rate. Cook denied wrongdoing.

ABC first reported on the letter to Cook.

Cook, who was initially appointed to the Fed board by President Joe Biden in 2022 and renominated to a 14-year term in 2023, is the first Black woman to hold the position.

The White House letter cites the June 29 Supreme Court opinion that, it says, entitles Cook to notice of the allegations and a chance to respond before any removal.

Though recent presidents have sought to respect the Fed's independence on interest rates, Trump since returning to office last year has repeatedly targeted the central bank and pressed for lower interest rates. In addition to seeking to remove Cook, he egged on a Justice Department probe into former chair Jerome H. Powell over renovations to the central bank's Washington headquarters.

The probe was later dropped amid pushback from a bipartisan group of lawmakers and a judge who deemed it an abuse of prosecutorial power.

In the June decision on the Fed, Roberts wrote that any change in the Fed's independent status would need to come from Congress.

"That is why we cannot accept the Government's contentions in this case," the chief justice wrote. "To do so would allow the President to remove a member of the Federal Reserve at any time, for any reason, without any notice before, and without any judicial check after."

MARK SCHIEFELBEIN/AP

The Supreme Court blocked President Donald Trump from firing Federal Reserve governor Lisa Cook about a month ago.

With Cassidy's backing, Blanche's path to AG post appears clear of obstacles

BLANCHE FROM **A1**

spring to settle Trump's claims against the IRS, which included a now-scuttled plan for a nearly $1.8 billion fund to compensate people who claim they were victims of political prosecutions.

But the senator couched his decision to back Blanche, who previously served as Trump's personal defense lawyer, as a choice between the current nominee and the prospect that Trump could pick someone worse.

"Mr. Blanche is not perfect, and he will tell you this, but the choice is not between perfection and Mr. Blanche," Cassidy said. "It is between Mr. Blanche and another acting attorney general who may not run the department effectively under President Trump and who, indeed may not be as good as Mr. Blanche."

He added: "I'll be criticized for this vote. What's new?"

The fact that Blanche's nomination was in doubt at all early Friday and hinging on Cassidy's vote underscored the growing unease that has emerged in some corners of the president's party over the Justice Department's direction.

It also highlighted the extent to which Trump's attacks on GOP lawmakers whom he deems insufficiently loyal have prompted an increased willingness among Republicans to buck his demands.

Cassidy lost his bid for reelection this year after Trump backed his GOP primary rival, Rep. Julia Letlow (R-Louisiana). He has repeatedly criticized the president since then and threatened to vote against administration priorities.

"I have a history with Mr. Trump, but that history does not matter one bit," Cassidy said Friday in explaining his vote on Blanche.

The senator said he came to his decision after weeks of conversation with Blanche and current and former Justice Department officials, including former attorney general William P. Barr. Barr resigned late in Trump's first term amid disagreements over the president's false claims that the 2020 election had been stolen.

Barr, Cassidy said, advised him to back Blanche's nomination, suggesting that as the lawyer who guided Trump through the criminal prosecutions he faced during his years out of office, Blanche had established a unique trust with the president, which could enable him to talk Trump out of bad decisions.

"I am realistic that President Trump can be unrelenting," Cassidy said. "This will be true no matter who the attorney general is. And this is the rationale for having a Senate-confirmed attorney general with more leverage to push back."

Since returning to the White House last year, Trump has eroded the Justice Department's long-standing tradition of independence while demanding it pursue prosecutions of his political enemies and reward his political allies.

Blanche has overseen many of those efforts serving first as the No. 2 official under then-Attorney General Pam Bondi and then as the department's acting head after Trump fired Bondi in April. He has defended the president's "right" to interfere with criminal investigations and his controversial pardons of those who attacked the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

Democrats have decried Blanche as a uniquely dangerous nominee who thus far has proved unable or unwilling to talk the president out of decisions that run contrary to the rule of law. As his confirmation battle has worn on, more and more Republicans have expressed similar concerns.

Earlier this week, Sens. John Cornyn (R-Texas) and Thom Tillis (R-North Carolina), two members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, had threatened to kill Blanche's nomination in committee over reservations they harbored about the out-of-court deal Blanche oversaw to resolve Trump's lawsuit against the IRS over the leak of his tax returns to the media.

In addition to the taxpayer-backed payout fund, the deal also provided unusual tax protections to Trump, two of his sons and their businesses, shielding them from any preexisting tax audits.

The fund proposal drew immediate bipartisan backlash with Democrats deriding it as a "slush fund" designed to reward Trump's allies forcing Blanche to walk back the proposal days after its announcement.

But Cornyn and Tillis, who are leaving the Senate after this year after tangling with Trump, demanded written assurances from Blanche that the president would not later reverse that decision before they agreed to support him.

Blanche ultimately relented, issuing statements late Sunday declaring the fund officially dead and clarifying that the deal's tax provisions protected the Trumps only from past tax audits and would not prevent the IRS from reviewing their finances in the future.

But critics have questioned whether Blanche's written pledges hold any legal weight, given they weren't also signed by Trump and his legal team, and could be ignored by the president at any point.

Murkowski raised that possibility in her statement announcing her decision to vote against Blanche's nomination Friday. The only reason the payout fund was now off the table, she said, was because Blanche needed Senate support for his nomination.

"Once we vote, that will end, and there is no telling what the future holds," she said, adding later: "The country needs an attorney general who will check the worst impulses of this administration. I hope Mr. Blanche is able to achieve that, if confirmed, but I simply do not have confidence that will be the case."

Despite pledging his support for Blanche, Cassidy echoed Murkowski's concerns. He said Blanche showed "poor judgment" in signing off on Trump's IRS deal and added that he was "particularly concerned about episodes of apparent lawfare — DOJ bringing suits against political enemies."

The Justice Department has, at the president's demand, launched probes of critics including former FBI director James B. Comey, New York Attorney General Letitia James (D), former CIA director John Brennan, ex-White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson and Democratic lawmakers who recorded a video this year calling on military service members to resist illegal orders.

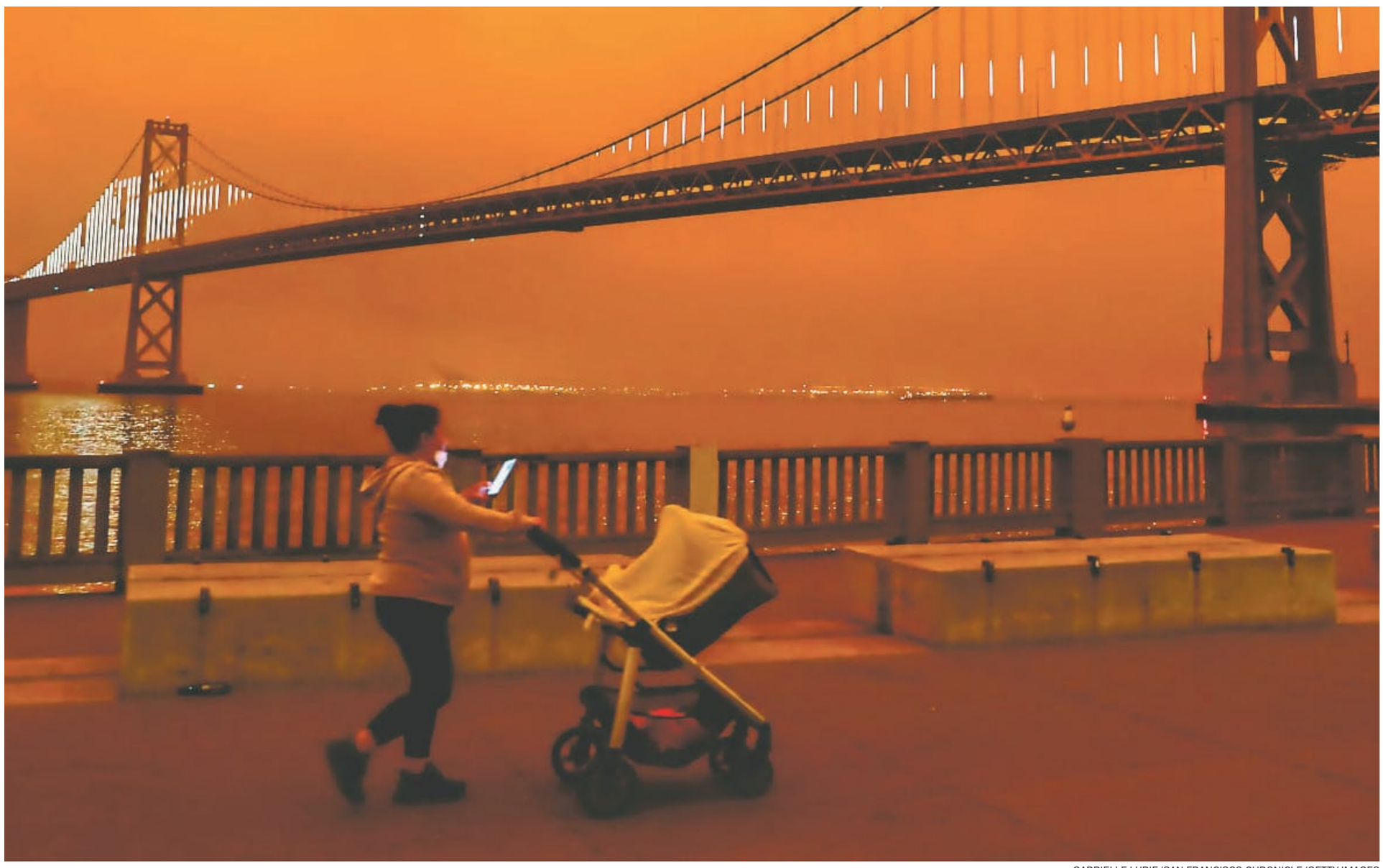
"A never-ending cycle of prosecuting political enemies undermines the rule of law, degrades the public's trust in our institutions and makes our politics more extreme when we need to unite to solve the big problems of our time," Cassidy said.

WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY IMAGES

Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-Louisiana) said Friday that he will vote to confirm Todd Blanche as attorney general, clearing the path for President Donald Trump's nominee.

Wildfire smoke is a growing danger to unborn babies, according to study

BY DANIEL WU



GABRIELLE LURIE/SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE/GETTY IMAGES

The Bay Bridge in San Francisco during wildfires in 2020. Wildfire pollution has become an increasing proportion of the pollution that pregnant mothers are exposed to.

Amid a summer when wildfire smoke has often filled the skies, a new study is adding to the body of research about the growing impact of fire-fueled air pollution, this time raising the alarm about prenatal health.

Wildfire pollution has become an increasing proportion of the pollution that pregnant mothers and their unborn babies are exposed to, according to a study published Friday.

The new study by University of Maryland researchers found that out of the air pollution unborn babies are exposed to, the share of exposure to wildfire-generated microscopic air pollution more than doubled between 2003 and 2019.

The study did not discuss specific health outcomes for the prenatal exposure and births it analyzed, but previous studies have suggested that fine-particulate-matter pollution, known as PM 2.5, caused by wildfires can be more harmful than other forms of air pollution.

Studies have linked wildfire smoke to poor pregnancy outcomes and a variety of early-childhood health issues. The particles are small enough to enter the lungs and bloodstream, and they have also been linked to lung damage, respiratory disease and cancers.

"We know that if we prevent PM 2.5 exposure in the prenatal period, these infants are going to grow to be healthier, more productive adults," said Michel Boudreaux, an associate professor of health policy and management at the University of Maryland and one of the study's authors.

The research also refers to the continued way pollution from wildfires cuts into improvements made in the United States' air quality in the past two decades.

Researchers credit the Clean Air Act for reducing pollution from cars and industrial facilities.

But wildfire smoke has cut into those gains, according to several studies in recent years. A 2023 study found that, since 2016, wildfire smoke has eroded the equivalent of around four years of air quality progress in most of the country.

Wildfire pollution occurs inconsistently, Boudreaux said, flaring up when mega-fires break out in different regions.

It remains a small share of the PM 2.5 Americans are exposed to, but annual levels of wildfire smoke stayed consistent as other sources of pollution declined over the past two decades, the new study found.

Boudreaux's study modeled air pollution across the country from 2003 to 2019, both including and excluding pollution created by wildfires, and used birth records to estimate the air pollution exposure to prenatal infants over this period. Researchers also analyzed the regions they studied by demographics and access to health care services.

The study found that the proportion of wildfire smoke in annual air pollution has increased by several percentage points from 2003 to 2019.

The greatest increase was in the Northwest, where around 13 percent of prenatal PM 2.5 exposure could be attributed to wildfires by the end of the decade. Regions with poor access to hospital facilities and maternal care, which were largely rural, had lower average PM 2.5 levels but faced the largest proportion of pollution from wildfires.

The new study also found that wildfires accounted for more than 70 percent of "exceedance days" — days where PM 2.5 levels exceeded 35 micrograms per cubic meter, an Environmental Protection Agency standard — by 2017 and 2018. Wildfire-attributable exceedance days stayed constant over the period studied, while exceedance days from other sources declined sharply.

"Because we've done such a good job of decreasing these non-wildfire sources, the share of 'exceedance days' that are due to wildfire smoke has increased," Boudreaux said. "If we want to continue making progress on this ... we have to start thinking about, how do we protect people from wildfire smoke?"

Academics not involved in the study said the work was limited by its scope and that the 2020s have seen a larger increase in wildfires after the study's time frame. The five-year period from 2020 to 2025 was the smokiest on record in the United States, a study last year found.

"The last six years have just looked fundamentally different," said Marshall Burke, a global environmental policy professor at Stanford University.

Michael Brauer, a professor at the School of Population and Public Health at the University of British Columbia, said further research is needed on the health risks of wildfire smoke, such as the effect of spikes in wildfire pollution at different stages of a pregnancy.

Burke said the study's focus on prenatal exposure highlighted the breadth of air pollution's impact across the population.

"We typically think of vulnerability to air pollution in terms of people with respiratory or other preexisting conditions," Burke said. "But here, this is showing that pregnancy ... really widens the lens of who we think as vulnerable."

Trump says he'll bring ballroom fight to Supreme Court after legal setback

BALLROOM FROM A1

White House's East Wing without warning to make space for the project. He has said presidents have long needed a ballroom to host VIPs.

The project has drawn scrutiny from congressional Democrats, who have opened investigations into whether Trump has made promises to donors in exchange for their gifts. The ballroom has also been generally panned by the public, with polls finding that most Americans are against the project.

GOP leaders in Congress earlier this year said they supported the project, but they have not prioritized legislation to authorize it. Some Republicans have also questioned the need to fund the project and whether Trump has been fully transparent about its scope. Internal estimates earlier this year by a contractor said that the project would cost $600 million, with half coming from taxpayers, according to a Washington Post investigation.

Trump has sought private funding for several of his Washington-area projects, including a planned triumphal arch and a statuary garden, as part of an effort to rush their construction.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, a nonprofit that is charged by Congress with helping preserve historic buildings, in December sued to block ballroom construction, saying that Trump had wrongly skipped required reviews before demolishing the East Wing and that only Congress could authorize significant changes to the White House grounds.

The Trump administration has moved ahead even as the court challenge has played out, with whirring cranes and teams of construction workers now a regular part of the White House backdrop. Trump has said he hopes to hold events in the ballroom before he is scheduled to leave office in January 2029.

The National Trust hailed Friday's ruling.

"This is a great day for our country and for the American people's right to voice their opinions about the historic places they cherish, including the White House," Brent Leggs, the organization's CEO, said in a statement. "The White House, a global landmark that symbolizes American identity and the ideals of democracy, belongs to the American people."

PETER W. STEVENSON/THE WASHINGTON POST

At right, the former site of the White House's East Wing, where President Donald Trump wants a ballroom built.

Trump, who has been fixated on the ballroom project and frequently invokes it in speeches and on social media, has said that the facility is necessary to protect presidents. The military is also building a "vast complex" under the ballroom, Trump has said, although he and military officials have declined to offer many details about that part of the project.

"Like usual, everything I do, they get sued, but I win the suits," Trump said in remarks in Las Vegas on Wednesday. "But it's unbelievable what's happening. It's a tremendous military complex. And for 150 years at the White House, we don't have a ballroom, we don't have a big space."

Millett, an appointee of President Barack Obama, and Garcia, an appointee of President Joe Biden, said that Trump is allowed to continue belowground work as well as construction on matters related to national security.

In their nearly 100-page opinion, the two judges rejected the Trump administration's arguments that the National Trust did not have standing to bring its case. The judges also stressed the need for separation of powers, saying that it was Congress's responsibility to perform oversight of White House construction projects and ensure the safety of future presidents.

"That is why, throughout history, Presidents have lived in the house the people built," Millett and Garcia wrote. "Executive actions that take control of that property out of the hands of the people's representatives while irreparably harming the historical and visual architecture of perhaps the most prominent public building in the United States seriously intrude on the public interest."

Judge Neomi Rao, a Trump appointee, dissented from Friday's ruling.

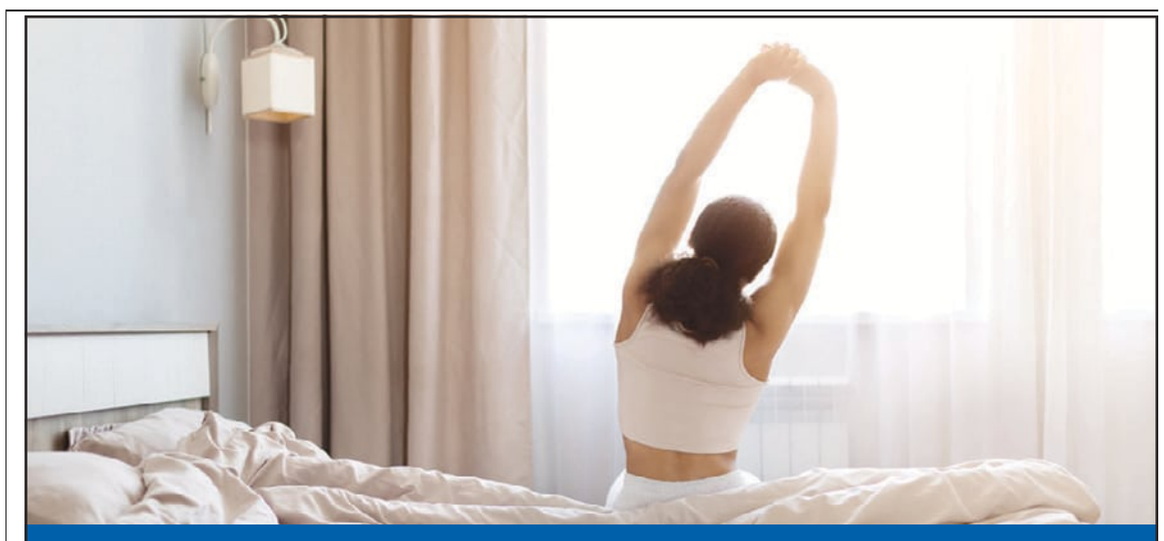
"The equities in this case turn on complex architectural and security determinations best made by the Secret Service and the military — not judges," Rao wrote. She also agreed with the administration that the National Trust lacked standing.

Trump administration lawyers argued in June to the panel that Trump had authority to make changes to the White House grounds.

Yaakov Roth, a Justice Department lawyer, also told the panel that federal courts should not have the power to stop the ballroom's construction. He contended that only a few people, such as those affected by the noise of construction, had standing to sue to stop the project or other changes that a president might wish to make to national landmarks.

Millett and Garcia flatly rejected that claim Friday.

"That is wrong," they wrote. "The bold assertion that the Executive can act with utter lawlessness, destroying treasured national landmarks and harming the interests of individuals, and that no court can stop it flouts our constitutional order."



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Ghost school operators rely on veterans to be complicit in GI Bill schemes

SCHOOLS FROM **A1**

ILLUSTRATION BY ISABEL SELIGER/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Meanwhile, Blue Star's instructors pretended to teach while the school received millions of dollars in GI Bill tuition from the federal government, according to investigators' files.

Foose said the hoax revealed itself when a government regulator showed up unexpectedly and poked his head in a classroom. "Clear as day, everybody's on videos, and there's one instructor up there, picking his nose," Foose told the agents in a recorded interview. "You don't even have to run a school or even be in education to walk into this place and realize that it's a joke."

Blue Star Learning was what federal agents call a "ghost" or "shell" school. Before its owner was convicted of fraud and sent to prison in 2020, Blue Star was in the vanguard of a GI Bill racket that has since been mimicked across the country, according to agents.

Unlike fraudulent GI Bill trade schools that exploit veterans by charging the government sky-high tuition to teach simple skills like grass-growing or rock-making, ghost schools rely on vets to be complicit in their schemes.

Since the first Trump administration, the Justice Department has won criminal convictions or imposed civil penalties against the operators of least 12 ghost schools for defrauding the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) under the GI Bill, according to federal court records and law enforcement files. All were for-profit vocational programs in which large numbers of students habitually skipped class or showed up while doing little to no work, the documents show.

Investigators told The Post that they suspect they've uncovered only a fraction of the ghost schools that are cheating the federal government. They noted that ghost operations can be surprisingly difficult to detect, in part because GI Bill students who profit from such scams are unlikely to file complaints.

Besides defrauding taxpayers, such rackets undermine the legitimacy of the GI Bill and make it harder for other veterans to trust that they can get a quality education from any school bearing the government's stamp of approval.

Since the GI Bill's passage toward the end of World War II, its purpose has been to help former service members gain skills to join the civilian workforce. The $11 billion-a-year program run by VA funds 36 months of tuition for veterans at a college or trade school.

VA also pays a housing subsidy directly to student veterans based largely on the cost of living in their area. Last year, the median subsidy nationwide was $2,161 per month, according to VA data. In some parts of the country, the monthly allowance can exceed $4,000.

For veterans who are eligible for the GI Bill but don't want to further their education, ghost schools have provided a benefits shortcut.

"Some veterans maybe aren't that interested in getting their education," Michelle Wasserman, then a federal prosecutor who oversaw the investigation into Blue Star Learning, said during a court hearing. "They go to a school like this, where they don't have to do very much or not very much is asked of them. It's kind of a fakey education and everyone is happy. The school owner gets a bunch of money and the veterans get to keep their benefits."

Lax oversight has contributed to the problem. Under federal law, VA auditors are required to visit schools funded by the GI Bill every two years to examine financial records and student files. But a July report by VA's Office of Inspector General found that of roughly 7,600 schools nationwide, 479 had not received a routine compliance visit in more than three years — and 153 others had never had one.

In addition, few standards exist to ensure that trade schools are delivering a quality education. Most colleges that grant degrees must obtain academic accreditation to qualify for GI Bill money, but trade or vocational schools are not required to do so.

Ten of the 12 schools that the government took action against were unaccredited, according to federal court records and law enforcement files.

While some ghost-school owners and operators have gone to prison, veterans have almost never been prosecuted for participating in such ruses. The Post could identify only one case in the past decade in which veterans faced criminal charges for swindling VA out of housing money by enrolling at a ghost school.

In that instance, the Justice Department won a fraud conviction in 2019 against the owner of a California truck-driving school — an Army veteran — who pleaded guilty to running a $4.2 million phantom-class racket. Two school employees also pleaded guilty to fraud.

More than 100 veterans enrolled in courses at the trucking school that never took place, according to the Justice Department. Federal authorities left it to the California attorney general's office to determine whether to file state criminal charges against veterans who allegedly collected housing stipends under false pretenses.

Ultimately, California prosecutors charged 35 of the veterans with conspiracy to commit grand theft, forgery and other fraud-related counts. The rest were not charged.

To charge veterans who enrolled in such programs, authorities must prove intent to defraud, not just that students were lazy or failed to complete coursework.

VA Inspector General Cheryl Mason, whose office acts as an independent watchdog that investigates cases of suspected fraud, said it can be difficult to distinguish between veterans who con VA for housing money and those who enroll in unchallenging schools just so they can pad their resumes.

"While veterans can be colluding in these cases," she told The Post in an interview, "oftentimes the veteran is a target. And they're sold on it as, you know, this easy thing. 'Oh, it's easy. You can do this. And let's go tell all your friends.'"

To better understand the ghost-school schemes, The Post sought GI Bill enrollment and complaint databases from VA under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), as well as records from law enforcement investigations conducted by the inspector general's office.

The government denied the requests, citing privacy exemptions. But The Post sued to compel the release of the material, arguing that it was in the public interest. After a year-long legal battle, VA and its inspector general's office released some of the databases and thousands of pages of law enforcement files. The Post also reviewed court records from ghost-school prosecutions across the country.

The Post made multiple requests with VA to interview Kenneth Smith, the executive director of its Education Service. The department declined. VA officials also declined to respond directly to written questions about the problem of ghost schools and the abuse of GI Bill housing benefits by some veterans.

In a statement, VA Press Secretary Quinn Slaven said a White House anti-fraud task force led by Vice President JD Vance "is moving at unprecedented speed and ferocity to root out the waste, abuse and criminal exploitation of government programs in these areas and others." Earlier this year, he added, VA created a tool that assigns a fraud risk score to schools and started a compliance and enforcement division to refer cases to the inspector general's office.

At the same time, he blamed state governments for enabling fraud within the GI Bill program in general. "The problem is that many state-level bureaucrats have looked the other way for years as fraudsters robbed government programs blind," he said.

VA has contractual arrangements with state governments to help approve and monitor GI Bill schools. Some states, in turn, have blamed VA and federal lawmakers for not doing more to deter fraud and for not giving them more resources to conduct oversight.

In the case of Blue Star Learning, a staffer working for the California Department of Veterans Affairs, or CalVet, in 2016 became the first regulator to report signs that the school might be a sham, according to law enforcement records. But it took three more years until federal and state officials jointly forced Blue Star to close.

CalVet declined to respond directly to written questions from The Post about ghost schools in the state. A spokeswoman, Kate Hoit, released a statement saying that California veterans "deserve programs that deliver real training and opportunity."

"CalVet takes any allegation of fraud involving GI Bill benefits seriously and is committed to protecting both veterans and taxpayers through rigorous oversight, accountability, and close coordination with state and federal law enforcement, and oversight partners," she added.

A 230-mile commute

During the first Trump administration, the VA inspector general's office formed a specialized unit to ferret out education fraud with sophisticated data-analysis tools.

Under GI Bill rules, colleges and universities can teach classes online, but veterans enrolled at trade schools must attend in person. Federal agents had grown suspicious that many vets were abusing the rule so they could collect housing benefits.

Using public records and other databases, analysts examined vocational school rosters to pinpoint where students lived. At some schools, they discovered that large numbers of students lived unusually long distances from campus — often in another state, according to Michael Missal, who served as VA inspector general from 2016 to 2025.

> *"It's kind of a fakey education and everyone is happy. The school owner gets a bunch of money and the veterans get to keep their benefits."*
>
> **Michelle Wasserman,** who oversaw the investigation into Blue Star Learning

"They're supposed to be in class, but how could somebody in Hawaii be showing up for a class in Kansas, you know, every Tuesday?" Missal told The Post in an interview. "That doesn't make any sense."

One of the most blatant examples was California Technical Academy, a computer-training school that taught hundreds of veterans at three hubs near Los Angeles and San Diego. In 2020, analysts determined that about 40 percent of its GI Bill students lived more than 75 miles away from the school's campuses, a clue that they were probably not meeting VA's requirement that students attend 18 hours of class in person each week, according to investigators' files.

Agents knocked on the door of one veteran's residence in Las Vegas — about a 230-mile drive from the campus in Riverside where he purportedly attended classes. When they questioned whether he was really driving all that way to go to school, he replied unconvincingly that he was, according to the agents' notes.

The veteran ended the interview by stating, "I hope I am not going to prison for this." (He did not.)

Investigators theorized that California Technical Academy became a magnet for ghost students because of its location, according to law enforcement files. At the time, veterans attending school in Southern California typically received GI Bill housing subsidies exceeding $3,000 per month.

Analysts cross-checked another set of databases and discovered that 56 veterans who were registered as full-time students at California Technical Academy also held full-time jobs working for the Department of Veterans Affairs, according to law enforcement files.

While it was conceivable that people were putting in a combined 60 to 80 hours a week at school and the office, agents concluded it was more likely that the VA employees were skipping class and double-dipping to get their full-time paychecks and housing money.

Undercover agents placed the school's campuses under surveillance and conducted surreptitious interviews. Staffers acknowledged that few veterans showed up for class. They also told agents that the academy falsified transcripts and enrollment records before submitting them to VA, according to law enforcement files.

In 2022, federal agents raided the three campuses and seized the academy's financial assets. The next year, the school's chief executive and two other administrators pleaded guilty in federal court to defrauding VA in a scheme that involved nearly 1,800 veterans and lasted a decade.

The federal government said its losses from California Technical Academy totaled about $105 million, two-thirds of it on housing subsidies and the rest on tuition. The Justice Department said it was the costliest GI Bill scam of any kind since lawmakers expanded the program in 2008.

During sentencing, defense attorneys for the two other administrators sought leniency from the judge on the grounds that their clients were uneducated or unsophisticated, court records show.

One, Philip Abod, a longtime instructor, had dropped out of ninth grade with a 0.25 grade point average; the other, Eric Bostock, a former janitor who served as director of student services, had "cognitive limitations" and an IQ of 82, according to court filings and statements by their lawyers. Each was sentenced to a year and a day in prison. Neither responded to requests for comment.

Michael Bostock, the school's chief executive and founder, and brother of Eric Bostock, pleaded guilty in 2022 to conspiracy to commit fraud. He admitted falsifying transcripts and attendance records to deceive VA and received a five-year sentence. A judge ordered him to pay $105 million in restitution.

In an interview last year with The Post while serving part of his sentence in home detention in Idaho, Bostock said California Technical Academy provided a legitimate education to those who wanted it. "We knew that there was cheating going on and things like that and we just, I made my instructors focus on the students that really wanted to be successful," he said.

But he acknowledged that many veterans signed up just to receive housing allowances. He said he told the staff to let those veterans skip class under the guise that they were conducting "independent study," an arrangement that violates GI Bill rules. Veterans who did little or no academic work still received passing grades so they could sign up for more courses, he added.

Typically, Bostock said, those students were in their late 50s or 60s and had no motivation to learn because they were already settled in their careers or retired.

"They were very open about it. They'd say, 'We want, I want the easiest program. What's the least amount I can do?' And several of them would enroll in that program," he recalled. "And then they would stay there as long as they could."

'We're here to earn, not to learn'

At other ghost schools across the country over the past decade, operators did little to conceal the bogus nature of their classes. In some cases, they offered kickbacks to recruiters who signed up veterans, according to court records and law enforcement files obtained under FOIA.

In Hawaii, a massage school owner pleaded guilty last year in federal court to defrauding VA of more than $9 million. Brian Matsudo, who ran the Elite Massage Academy in Honolulu, admitted arranging kickbacks for recruiters who enrolled no-show vets in courses that cost VA as much as $21,455 in tuition per student.

Matsudo's sentencing is scheduled for September. His attorney, Myles Breiner, declined to comment.

In Virginia, the owner of a small welding school paid a recruiter to induce veterans to register for fake courses in "fine arts welding" and "exotic welding," then charged VA as much as $34,200 per course, according to court records and investigators' files. In comparison, welding classes at a nearby community college cost between $500 and $1,000, the files show.

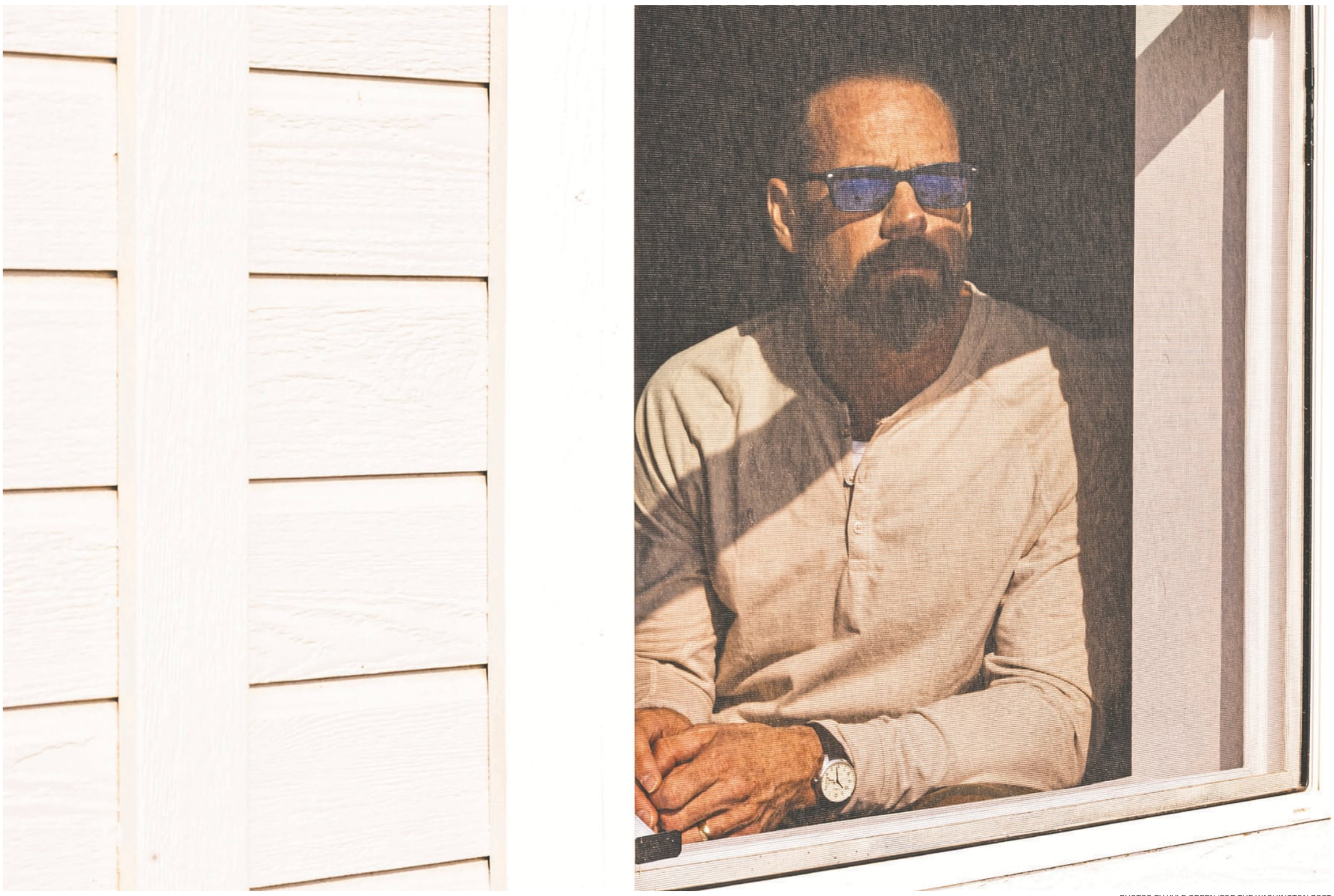
Undercover federal agents staked out the school — the Hampton Roads Skills Center in Newport News — and spied students clocking in and then, a few minutes later, clocking out, the files show. Other times, agents found the school doors locked during the day and the parking lot empty.

One veteran who purportedly received 600 hours of instruction told agents that he didn't put on a welding mask even once. "I never had no interest in no welding," he admitted, law enforcement files show.

The owner, Wilbert J. McNair Jr., a church pastor, pleaded guilty in 2017 to defrauding VA of $1.4 million in tuition for 83

SEE **SCHOOLS** ON **A8**

At some ghost schools, operators did little to conceal bogus nature of classes



PHOTOS BY KYLE GREEN/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

California Technical Academy founder Michael Bostock, seen above and below in home detention last year in Idaho, pleaded guilty in federal court in 2022 to defrauding the Department of Veterans Affairs in a scheme that involved nearly 1,800 veterans and lasted a decade. Bostock received a five-year sentence in the case, and a judge ordered him to pay $105 million in restitution.

SCHOOLS FROM A7

students. He was sentenced to more than three years in prison and ordered to repay the money.

McNair did not respond to requests for comment.

In court filings, prosecutors called Hampton Roads Skills Center "a sham school." They calculated that veterans enrolled there received a combined $1.2 million in housing subsidies. Yet none of those veterans faced charges for accepting that money.

One veteran signed up for nine welding classes so he could collect $46,000 from VA for housing and books — even though he already had worked as a professional welder for nearly a decade and as a welding instructor at another school, according to McNair's plea agreement.

Six of the ghost schools that the federal government has investigated over the past decade were barber or cosmetology programs.

In Mississippi, a hairstyling school called April's Mane Attraction certified to VA that veterans received 1,500 hours of instruction to prepare for the state barbering exam. Federal agents, however, discovered that classes were rarely taught, that some registered students lived hundreds of miles away from the school, and that the coursework included word puzzles designed for children learning their colors, according to investigators' files.

The GI Bill requires schools to charge veterans and civilians the same tuition. Yet the hairstyling academy billed VA $22,400 per student — about 10 times more than what it charged nonveterans, investigators' files show.

In 2024, a judge ordered the school and its owner, April Tucker Beard, to pay more than $900,000 in civil damages and penalties after the Justice Department sued, alleging violations of the False Claims Act. Beard did not respond to messages seeking comment.

In Chesapeake, Virginia, the College of Beauty and Barber Culture served veterans who, on paper, were looking to launch careers as hairstylists. Most collected about $1,500 from VA for housing each month and up to $1,000 annually for books and supplies, according to court records and investigators' files.

But of the more than 350 veterans who enrolled in the college, only seven were able to pass a state exam to obtain a barber or cosmetology license, the files show.

Veterans later admitted to federal agents that the school was full of "ghosts" and that their unofficial motto was, "We're here to earn, not to learn." They said students were instructed to sign attendance logs each day so VA auditors would think that classes were taking place, according to investigators' files.

The school's husband-and-wife owners, William and Katherine Grobes, pleaded guilty to defrauding VA of $4.5 million in tuition. Each was sentenced in 2017 to five years in prison and ordered to repay that amount of money. They did not respond to requests for comment.

Prosecutors said veterans who attended the school received a total of $10.5 million in GI Bill money for housing, books and supplies.

None of the students faced charges.

'We were desperate'

Before veterans flocked to it, Blue Star Learning was a tiny IT service business that taught basic hardware and software courses in a strip mall north of downtown San Diego. Most of Blue Star's clients were private companies or state agencies with entry-level personnel looking to improve their computer skills.

The owner, Nimesh Shah, told The Post in an interview that he bought the school in 2010 for $50,000 but struggled to make ends meet. After two years, Blue Star was generating just $3,500 a month in revenue, he said. Some weeks, Shah couldn't find enough students to hold a class. "We were just sitting there," he recalled.

Around 2012, a consultant suggested that Shah seek VA approval to offer computer training for veterans under the GI Bill. Shah said he knew "nothing" about the GI Bill then but was aware San Diego was a military town with lots of veterans. He paid the consultant about $4,000 to prepare Blue Star's application.

"I was like, doesn't hurt," he said. "We were desperate."

In 2013, VA cleared the school to accept GI Bill students. A handful of veterans signed up for three-month courses that cost between $2,000 and $5,000, and the school's finances stabilized, Shah said. "We were able to pay the rent," he added.

Then, in 2015, Blue Star's fortunes transformed almost overnight. One evening, a Navy veteran walked in and offered to triple Blue Star's business by rustling up scores of his old Navy buddies.

"He's like, 'Look, I have 80 to 100 folks and we are happy to bring them over to you,'" Shah recalled. There was just one catch. Instead of attending classes Monday through Friday, these veterans could come only twice a week because most had full-time jobs.

Shah said he knew that arrangement might conflict with VA rules, which required veterans enrolled in trade schools full-time to attend in person 18 hours each week.

He said he didn't think it was feasible to teach nine hours at a clip. He also wondered how these veterans could juggle a heavy class load while staying employed full-time. So he proposed a compromise: classes three days a week, for six hours each. The Navy veteran agreed, Shah said, adding: "Right there and then, he's like, 'You're on!'"

Privately, Shah figured it was too good to be true. But the following Monday, he said, Navy veterans swamped Blue Star with phone calls and emails, wanting to register for class. The school immediately had to scramble to find more classroom space.

Things snowballed, and within a year, the number of veterans enrolled at Blue Star nearly quadrupled. In 2016, VA paid the school $7.4 million to cover their tuition, investigators' files show.

"Word of mouth got out really quick, and five guys brought five guys, and they each brought five guys. It was just insane," Foose, the school's former admissions director, told federal agents. "It was like 800-something people. They didn't even fit in the school because they would just line up out the door."

Foose did not respond to messages from The Post seeking comment.

What soon became apparent, however, was that these GI Bill students were not there to learn, according to Shah and Foose. They said most were men in their 50s and 60s who had good-paying government jobs: at the post office, at the VA medical center in La Jolla, or at nearby military bases as defense contractors. Others were retired and collecting military pensions, as well as disability compensation from VA.

"When you start teaching them, they were nonchalant about it," Shah recalled. "They're like, 'Okay, fine. You know, teach me, don't teach me. I don't care.'" They didn't explicitly say they just wanted their GI Bill housing money. But Shah and his staff caught on. "We got the point," he said.

As he became more savvy about the GI Bill, Shah said he realized the school could charge much higher prices for undemanding classes as long as he didn't exceed VA's annual tuition cap. He increased tuition fourfold, to more than $20,000 per course — about three times what San Diego State University charged in tuition for a full year of classes, court records show.

To obtain VA's approval for the tuition increase, Blue Star had to certify that it was obeying two federal regulations: that it was charging veterans and nonveterans the same amount, and that at least 15 percent of the students in every course were civilians. Those requirements for GI Bill schools are based on the logic that if at least a small number of civilians were willing to pay full tuition, then the class must be legitimate.

In his interview with The Post and in court records, Shah admitted that he and Blue Star repeatedly lied to VA about following the rules because it couldn't find enough civilians to pay the higher tuition. It took regulators years to uncover the extent of his deceit, despite obvious warning signs that Blue Star had become a fraudulent operation.

Fake companies and burner phones

In 2016, while Shah was vacationing in Mexico, a senior education specialist with the California Department of Veterans Affairs named Shane Ferrebee arrived at Blue Star for an unannounced visit.

Under an arrangement with VA, California officials were responsible for monitoring GI Bill schools in the state and ensuring they adhered to regulations.

Blue Star had recently submitted an enrollment form stating that it had 700 GI Bill students, according to an account Ferrebee later gave to investigators. He said he thought that was fishy because Blue Star only had a few classrooms, according to an account he later gave to investigators.

His suspicions were already heightened because he had warned Shah the year before that the ratio of veterans to civilians at Blue Star was out of balance. "I never trusted the guy," Ferrebee recalled in an interview with federal agents. "He was just too nice, and just too friendly and just [had] too many veterans."

He decided he had grounds to conduct a surprise inspection.

Ferrebee looked in a classroom and found 50 students watching videos and "just hanging out," with no instruction taking place, investigators' files show. He also determined that Blue Star was still violating the 15 percent rule because it had too few civilians. Soon after, he notified the school in writing that it was being removed from the GI Bill program.

Ferrebee declined a request from The Post to comment.

SEE SCHOOLS ON A9

Veterans at one school had unofficial motto: 'We're here to earn, not to learn'

SCHOOLS FROM A8

Shah knew he had been breaking the rules, he told The Post. He said he was forced to lay off most of his staff.

But Blue Star had become dependent on GI Bill money, so Shah hatched a risky and complex plan to get back in, court records show.

To persuade VA and California officials that the school now had enough civilian students, Shah submitted falsified enrollment data, according to court records and investigators' files. He included a spreadsheet with the names of recent graduates and their employers — but most of the names and companies were fake, the records and files show.

Shah also paid someone to create individual websites for 30 phony companies. He had a Blue Star staffer buy 30 cellphones so that if regulators called the contact numbers listed on the websites, his staff could answer, court records show.

The gambit initially worked. In 2017, one year after removing Blue Star, California and VA officials readmitted the school to the GI Bill program. Veterans eager to cash in their housing allowances returned in droves, according to investigators' files.

But the following year, Blue Star caught the attention of investigators working for VA's inspector general.

As they did with California Technical Academy, analysts cross-checked names of Blue Star students with a database of VA employees. They found 50 people who were claiming to be studying full time at Blue Star while collecting full-time paychecks from VA.

Over several months, agents secretly interviewed former students and employees. Many described the computer classes as a farce and said that it was an open secret that veterans enrolled just to get their housing benefits, according to investigators' files.

One former administrator told them about the list of fake names and companies that Shah maintained, the files show.

In June 2019, agents working for VA's inspector general and the FBI raided Blue Star's offices. Other agents arrived at Shah's home to question him. He promptly confessed to falsifying records, according to investigators' files and court records.

"I admitted it because, see, once you have the feds kicking in your door, there's no point in lying," Shah told The Post.

He also acknowledged that he was driven by greed. "It was lucrative," he said. "I mean, there's no ifs, ands or buts."

In November 2019, Shah pleaded guilty in federal court to wire fraud and making false statements. Prosecutors calculated that VA lost $29 million in the Blue Star scam. Of that, $11 million was tuition paid to the school and $18 million was housing money paid to veterans.

At Shah's sentencing the next year, his attorney, Michael Lipman, said Blue Star was "not a total sham" because some courses were actually taught, even if veterans were not paying attention. But he acknowledged that Shah "chose to do something really stupid" and that he "lied repeatedly," including by inventing "totally fictitious students" to increase the number of civilians enrolled.

At the same time, Lipman argued, veterans who attended Blue Star just for housing allowances were culpable, too — and he criticized prosecutors for not going after them.

"The government doesn't appear to be interested in making any attempts to get back any of the money from these people," he said.

Wasserman, the lead prosecutor, acknowledged in court that "some of the veterans are complicit here."

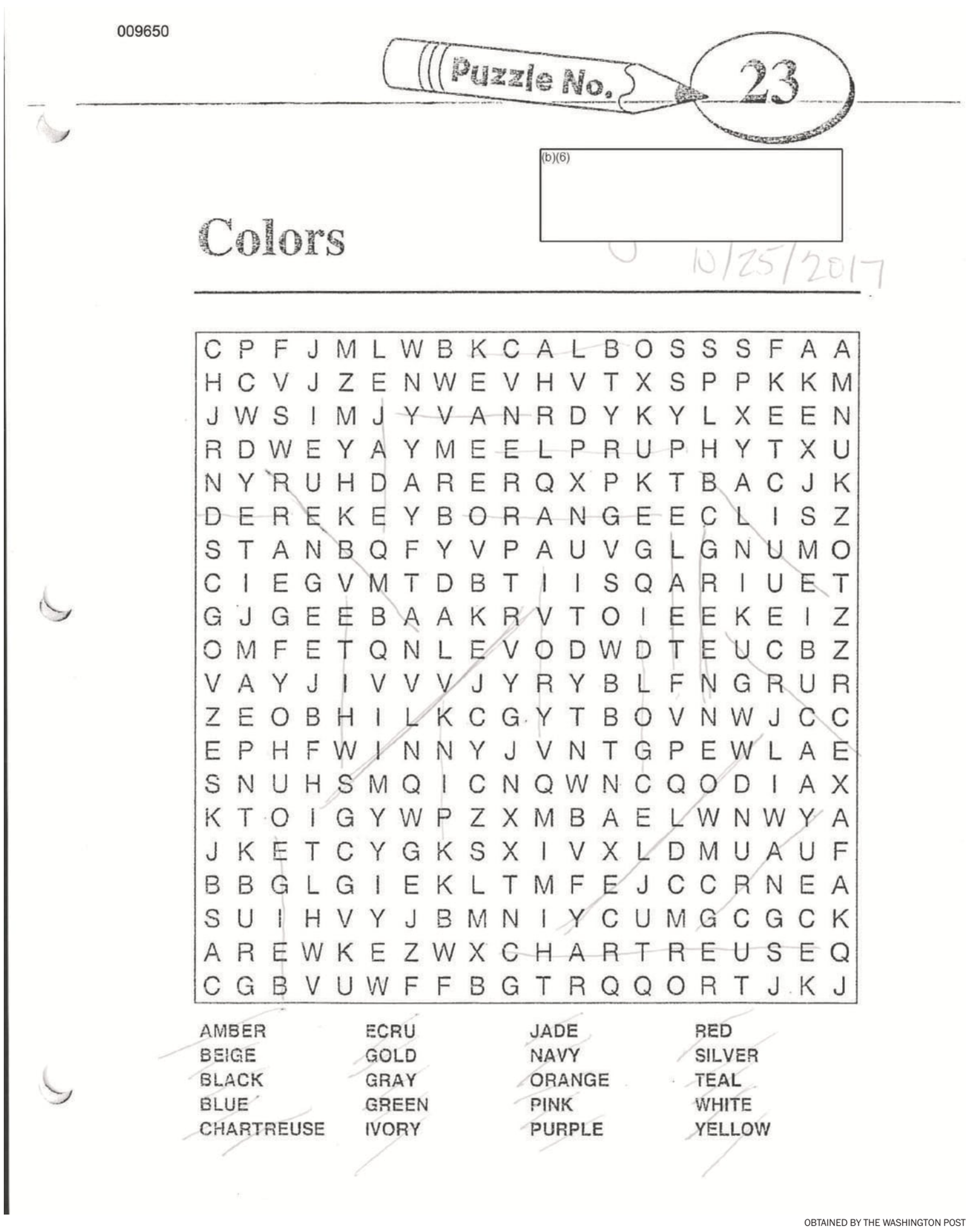
That prompted U.S. District Judge John A. Houston to ask why the Justice Department hadn't charged any veterans as co-conspirators.

"They are taking money from the government, knowing that they didn't earn it," he said, adding later: "There have been veterans who caused Americans and taxpayers to lose as well, and there has been no look-see into that."

"It's a difficult case to bring," Wasserman responded. She said it was part of a pattern that federal authorities were seeing around the country but suggested that it was easier to hold ghost school owners accountable than veterans.

"The scheme is, in part, scammy schools and veterans who are willing to go there" for the housing benefits, she said. "And that's unfortunate."

The judge sentenced Shah to 45 months and ordered him to pay $29 million in restitution.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OBTAINED BY THE WASHINGTON POST

A puzzle offered by April's Mane Attraction, a hairstyling school in Mississippi, as part of a course to prepare vets for the state barbering exam. Six of the ghost schools that the federal government has investigated over the past decade were barber or cosmetology programs.

CRAIG WHITLOCK/THE WASHINGTON POST

The San Diego building at right was home to Blue Star Learning, a vocational school that defrauded taxpayers of $29 million in GI Bill funds. Of that, $11 million was tuition paid to the school and $18 million was housing money paid to veterans.

Nate Jones and Caitlin Gilbert contributed to this report.

Methodology

The Washington Post obtained comprehensive records spanning 2018 to 2024 from the Department of Veterans Affairs' GI Bill Comparison Tool via the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and merged them with VA's 2025 Comparison Tool data pulled from the Internet Archive. Data is current as of May 2025.

The Post grouped non-degree-granting schools into categories — such as unaccredited trade specialization or flight schools — based on their accreditation status, facility codes and specific course offerings. VA tracks two separate enrollment statuses, counting all GI Bill participants and those who served after 9/11. Unless specified, enrollment figures were based on whichever figure was higher in the data. Tuition rates were based on post-9/11 enrollment because tuition figures were available only in post-9/11 data. Information on unaccredited and vocational programs is often incomplete, so reporters used school addresses found in the FOIA data to query the Google Places API and gather missing business statuses and classification types.

About this story

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ECONOMY & BUSINESS

$100 billion in tariffs has been refunded. Will you get any?

Major corporations are getting hundreds of millions back from the Trump administration. Most individuals aren't.

BY JULIE Z. WEIL

The Trump administration has refunded about $100 billion in tariffs in response to the Supreme Court ruling that declared the tariffs illegal, according to a new court filing this week.

Major corporations are getting huge refunds: $2.2 billion for Apple, $1.3 billion for Ford, $600 million for Amazon. (Amazon Executive Chairman Jeff Bezos owns The Washington Post.)

While some companies have said they will use the refunds to reduce their prices, experts say not to expect many price cuts. Kimberly Clausing, a UCLA professor who served as a tax policy official under the Biden administration, said some companies don't feel confident enough to change their prices based on the revoked tariffs, since President Donald Trump has replaced those levies with others that are also likely to be partially or completely thrown out by courts.

"If you're a firm, you're wondering what the tariff policy is," Clausing said. "Some of that pass-through to consumer prices has been slower than you might think if it were really permanent policies. That's good news in the short term for consumers, but it also means you won't necessarily see as big a swing in the other direction." She noted that some companies were simply "gambling" all along that the import taxes would be thrown out in court, rather than raising prices much in the first place.

Even if they paid higher costs because of the now-invalidated tariffs, most American households won't see any of the refund money directly.

The Tax Foundation estimates that the average U.S. household spent an extra $1,000 as a result of the tariffs in 2025, most of it relating to the specific tariffs that have been overturned.

Because Trump has since replaced most of those tariffs with new ones authorized in a different way, the organization estimates the average household will pay about $900 extra in 2026.

So why aren't many individual consumers getting compensated alongside big companies?

In response to the Supreme Court ruling, U.S. Customs and Border Protection set up a process for requesting refunds. To use the system, the payers have to be registered with the government as an "Importer of Record" or an authorized Customs broker — in other words, not just someone who ordered an item on the internet that was made in a foreign country and ended up paying more for it.

If you paid a tariff on something you had shipped to you by UPS or FedEx, you can look up your tracking number for the shipment on the companies' websites. If the companies got money back for your shipment, they are supposed to send you the refund. Amazon said in a quarterly earnings call that it plans to send refunds to individual customers in limited cases for which it can identify customers who paid more due to tariffs. The company said it would "proactively contact" those customers but did not provide more information about how it would find them.

Some other companies that raised prices to accommodate the tariffs are taking heat for not passing on the refunds. Customers are suing Ford and Costco, among others.

Alan Sykes, a trade law expert at Stanford Law School, said he doesn't think the customers have much to go on.

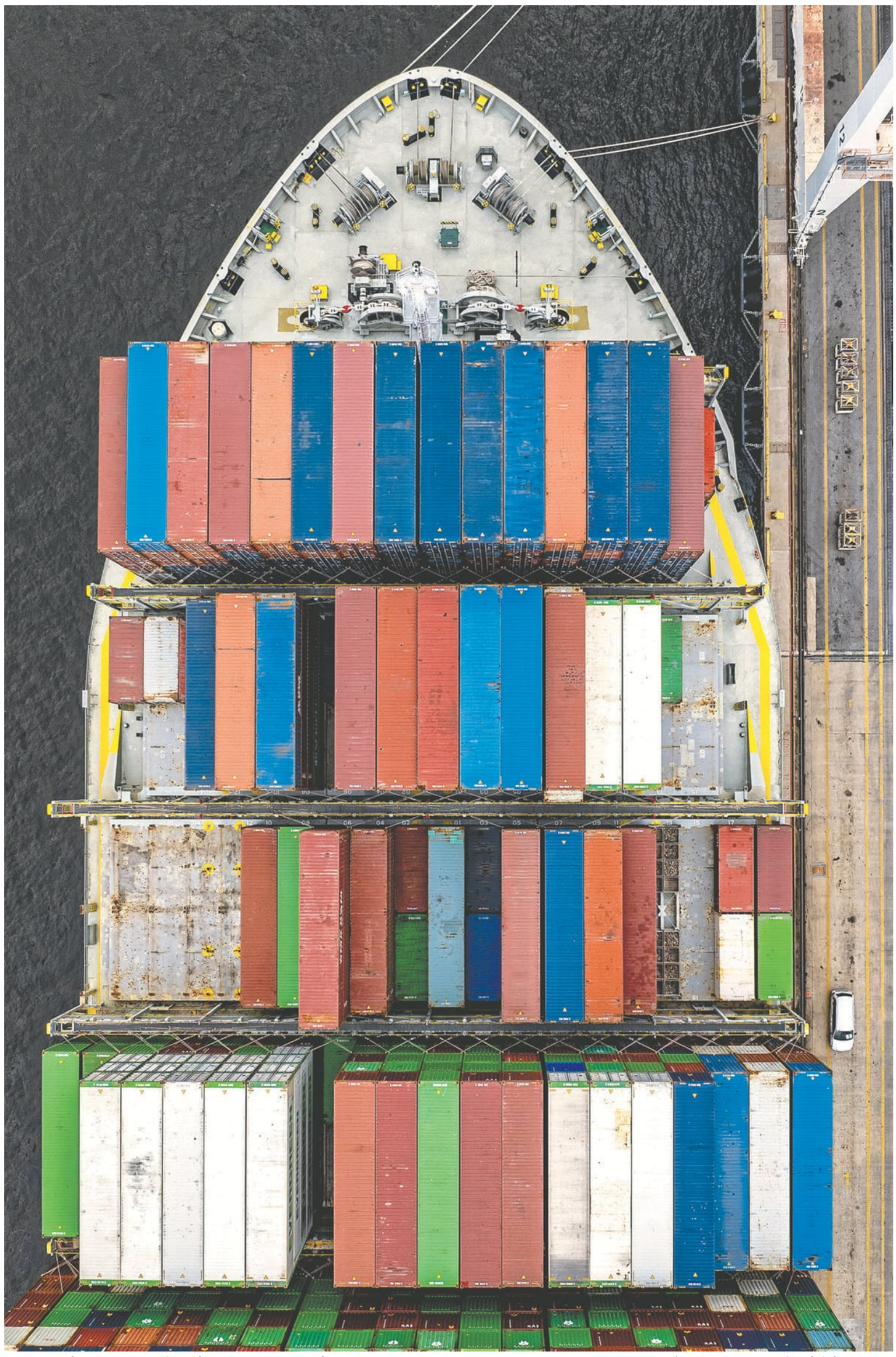
"They willingly paid the higher price. Ford could have raised the price of the car for any arbitrary reason. … You don't have a claim," Sykes said. "Certain companies are saying they're going to lower their prices going forward … not because of a legal imperative, but a public relations logic."

Matilde Bombardini, an economist at the University of California at Berkeley, said she understands the logic of a customer who wants money back.

She said research suggests that importers who paid 10 percent more because of the tariffs typically charged their customers about 3 percent more and absorbed the rest. "Costco's getting back the whole 10 percent," she said. "Conceptually, we could all agree that the 3 percent should go back to the consumers."

She noted that the refunds are likely unprecedented in scope. The tariffs that were invalidated applied to almost all categories of goods from every country in the world, though there were some exemptions.

In the court filing this week, a Customs and Border Protection official said companies have filed more than 178,000 valid claims to refund tariffs on more than 25 million imports since the claim system opened in April, leading to more than $100 billion in refunds and interest so far.



A cargo ship at the Port of Baltimore last year. Estimates show the average U.S. household spent an extra $1,000 because of tariffs in 2025.

U.S. stocks jump after job cuts, raising hopes that a rate hikes can wait

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Stocks rose on Wall Street Friday and Treasury yields fell after the government reported that employers unexpectedly cut 23,000 jobs last month.

Every major index notched a second straight week of gains, which included several fresh records. It marks a strong start to August following several weak months.

The S&P 500 rose 47.68 points, or 0.6 percent, to 7,757.64. That topped the all-time high it set on Tuesday. The benchmark index has been on a record run throughout the year.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 151.83 points, or 0.3 percent, to 54,036.93. That put it just short of the record it set on Wednesday. The Nasdaq composite rose 342.26 points, or 1.3 percent, to 26,690.62.

Technology stocks, with their big market values, did much of the heavy lifting for the broader market. They are often the heaviest weights determining the market's direction. Nvidia jumped 2.3 percent and Broadcom rose 1.7 percent.

The bond market reacted more strongly to the weaker signal on the jobs market, which can be seen as allowing the Federal Reserve more time before raising interest rates to fight inflation.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 4.64 percent from 4.67 percent just prior to the jobs update. It was as low as 4.60 percent before recovering a bit.

The yield on the two-year Treasury, which more closely tracks expectations for Fed action on interest rates, fell to 4.20 percent from 4.22 percent prior to the report's release. It was as low as 4.15 percent before edging back up.

Overall, the report paints a dimmer picture of the jobs market, which has been one of the brighter areas of the economy amid rising inflation and worries about household spending. It included a revision to the figures for June and May that involved slashing a combined 103,000 jobs from payrolls for those months.

The Fed has been holding interest rates steady amid worries about hotter inflation, fueled by a rise in oil prices because of the U.S. war with Iran. Wall Street expects at least one rate increase by the end of the year, with forecasts shifting for the next meeting. Expectations for a rate cut in September are down to 42 percent, from 55 percent on Thursday and from 67 percent a week ago, according to CME FedWatch. A weakening jobs market could make matters more complicated for the Fed, which has to balance supporting job growth with fighting inflation. Raising interest rates can help tame inflation by slowing economic growth. A weaker jobs market, though, could become even shakier under higher interest rates as businesses find it more difficult to expand under increased borrowing rates.

Businesses, and Wall Street, prefer lower interest rates because it can help boost investments. That might bolster a weakened jobs market, but it could worsen already stubborn inflation. Wall Street will get several important inflation updates next week. The most closely watched will be the consumer price index, or CPI, which measures costs for consumers.

DIGEST

PHARMACEUTICALS

Kaiser Permanente facing lawsuit

An Atlanta-area woman alleges that she was wrongly diagnosed with cancer and underwent an unneeded hysterectomy because of a labeling error.

Cassandra Barksdale and her attorneys filed a lawsuit Tuesday against Kaiser Permanente alleging the mix-up led to the surgery and months of physical and emotional pain.

According to the lawsuit, another patient's tissue sample was mistakenly labeled as belonging to Barksdale, who at age 43 then underwent a full hysterectomy on May 15, 2025, and was told she would get instructions about chemotherapy.

It's unclear how the mix-up occurred. In September, Barksdale was informed that a DNA analysis found the tissue sample showing an aggressive form of endometrial uterine cancer belonged to a different patient and not to her, the lawsuit says.

Barksdale went to Kaiser Permanente Southwood Medical Center in Jonesboro, Georgia, in early 2025 to seek treatment for heavy bleeding and fibroids, which are noncancerous growths in and around the uterus. She underwent a biopsy on March 10, 2025.

Barksdale said that after she got the biopsy results on March 17, 2025, she lived for months believing she had an aggressive type of cancer, sending her and her sons into a deep depression.

Representatives for Kaiser Permanente wrote in a statement that, "Ms. Barksdale should not have experienced this."

Because of privacy laws, information about the other patient — including what happened to her and whether cancer treatment was delayed — isn't publicly available.

The Georgia lawsuit asks for unspecified damages.

— Associated Press

AIR TRAVEL

FAA orders new Boeing inspections

The Federal Aviation Administration this week ordered inspections for hundreds of Boeing planes, following reports of cracks in some older models.

The now-finalized rule, which was unveiled Thursday and kicks in Sept. 10, applies to certain aircraft under three Boeing 737 Max models: the 737-8, 737-9 and 737-8200. The FAA estimates this covers 471 planes — and said it is using this directive to address "the unsafe condition" tied to prior reports. So far, no cracks have been found in these specific Max models. But when proposing the rule back in November, the FAA noted it had received reports of cracks in a forward bear strap for several older, "Next-Generation" 737 planes. Bear straps are metal sheets that reinforce areas on planes like doorways and emergency exits.

The Max jets have "a similar design and build process" to the older models, "making those airplanes susceptible to the same crack condition," the FAA wrote in November. The agency warned that the issue could "adversely affect the structural integrity of the airplane" if not addressed.

The Virginia-based aircraft maker said it sent operators inspection instructions for the affected Next Generation 737s back in 2019, and the FAA later mandated those checks in 2021. The company added that it had already expanded those inspections to Max jets — and the FAA's latest directive now similarly mandates that process.

"We support both directives and continue to support our airline customers," Boeing said in a statement.

The FAA noted Thursday that its directive also requires inspections of the fuselage skin of planes with existing repairs.

Just last month, the FAA said Boeing would again be allowed to take responsibility for certifying all of its 737 Max and 787 planes.

— Associated Press

SPORTSWEAR

Under Armour sees steep declines

Under Armour on Friday forecast a steeper annual revenue decline, underscoring the challenge of reviving growth as cautious consumers rein in spending on athletic apparel amid economic uncertainty in its key North American market.

Shares of the company were down about 9 percent in early trading.

Persistent inflation and a softer consumer spending environment have pressured demand for apparel, footwear and accessories, particularly in North America, weighing on Under Armour's turnaround efforts.

— Reuters

In Texas, the economy rather than abortion takes center stage

BY MATTHEW CHOI

ARLINGTON, TEXAS — In 2024, Texas was a battleground for the culture wars.

Democrats highlighted the state's restrictive abortion policies in both the presidential and Senate races that year. They spent millions on ads featuring testimonials of women who suffered health consequences as a result of Texas' abortion ban. Republicans, meanwhile, poured money into ads casting Democrats as weak on immigration and claiming they supported gender transitions for children.

This year, it's all about the economy.

In some of their first major policy speeches of the general election, Democratic state Rep. James Talarico and Republican Attorney General Ken Paxton, candidates in this year's competitive Senate race, unveiled competing economic plans to address the soaring cost of living.

Talarico laid out his "New American Dream" Wednesday featuring an array of policy proposals: universal child care, dividends from taxing artificial intelligence, medical debt forgiveness and investment in public higher and vocational education. The plan also tackled issues Democratic candidates often don't touch, such as cracking down on tax fraud to bring down the federal deficit.

"The American Dream has become an American Nightmare. It's too expensive to buy a home," Talarico said during a speech Wednesday. "It's too expensive to get married and have kids. It's too expensive to retire comfortably. People are working hard every day. They're playing by the rules. But those rules of today weren't written for us. They were written for billionaires."

Meanwhile, Paxton is on a statewide tour this week laying out a "Protecting the Texas Promise" plan that would use tax cuts to subsidize home down payments, health care premiums and "developing a healthy lifestyle," including gym memberships and GLP-1 medications. Both candidates also propose making the child tax credit permanent.

"We all know that Texans and Americans are struggling with expenses, including medical expenses, and I want to make it easier for people to pay those expenses," Paxton said at a Tuesday rally in Allen, Texas, to tout his economic plan. "The entire country depends on how this election turns out: Whether we keep the Senate, whether we're going to tell the rest of the world that we've elected a liberal socialist Democrat."

Talarico and Paxton have been neck and neck in public polls, and Talarico is one of the most prodigious fundraisers in the country, already raising more than $68 million. But no Democrat has won statewide in Texas in more than three decades, despite promising signs for past Democrats. Democratic Rep. Colin Allred challenged Sen. Ted Cruz in 2024 but lost by more than eight percentage points.

BRENDA BAZÁN/AP

Democratic state Rep. James Talarico, above, is a candidate running against Republican Ken Paxton in Texas's competitive Senate race.

BRANDON BELL/GETTY IMAGES

Paxton, above, Texas's attorney general, and Talarico have unveiled competing economic plans.

Candidates nationally have pivoted this year to highlighting economic issues as voters list affordability as a top concern. The economy and high prices were by a wide margin the most important issue for voters, according to a Washington Post-Ipsos poll conducted last month. While 54 percent of registered voters put the economy as one of their top three issues, only 15 percent listed abortion or health care. Just 6 percent listed equality, women's rights, racism or LGBTQ issues.

"Most people are going to resonate with just getting by right now," said Emily Herrell, a nurse from McKinney, Texas, who attended Talarico's economic platform announcement. "I'd love to figure out the abortion issues as well, but I think that's kind of further down the line."

Herrell said reproductive care was a major priority for her as a health care worker, but for most voters, "we've got to just be able to survive right now." She lauded Talarico's proposal to forgive medical debt, noting her family was $20,000 in debt after her son was diagnosed with cancer at age 6.

Democrats view the economy as a major vulnerability for Republicans, who control both chambers of Congress and the White House. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz caused a spike in prices for fuel and other imported goods, and President Donald Trump has dismissed affordability concerns as a "hoax" concocted by Democrats.

Talarico's campaign disparaged the Paxton proposal as an about face in response to growing voter frustration with the economy.

"The idea that Ken Paxton, a multimillionaire who owns 15 properties, has suddenly decided to care about Texans' pocketbooks on his 479th day of running for U.S. Senate is laughable," Talarico's campaign said in a statement.

Paxton pushed back, saying his plan would bring some of the biggest tax cuts for Texans in a generation and criticizing Talarico for voting against a measure to bar Texas from ever adopting an income tax. He also noted that inflation spiked under President Joe Biden, blaming Democrats for high prices.

The aftermath of the covid pandemic, which disrupted global supply chains, contributed to upward pressure on inflation during the Biden administration. Fuel price spikes caused by Russia's the 2022 invasion of Ukraine were also a factor. Still, several Democrats criticized their own party for focusing too much on social issues in 2024 and not enough on the economy, giving Republicans an opening to cast them as more concerned with gender than voters' pocket book concerns.

Republicans hammered Democrats with ads claiming Democrats wanted to legalize medical gender transitions for minors without parental consent. Cruz, who faced a competitive challenge by Allred in that year's Senate race, credited his ads on trans youth as a major factor in his victory.

"That there was a mistake," Rep. Vicente Gonzalez (D-Texas), who is running in a competitive seat won by Trump in 2024, said of the 2024 focus on social issues. "Last cycle, I was having some very serious arguments with my own caucus on some of the messaging on the national campaign. I don't feel that way anymore."

Neither Talarico nor Paxton has completely abandoned the social issues that drove the 2024 race. Paxton has repeatedly gone after Talarico for his support of trans youth and his past comments using his faith to justify progressive policy.

"First of all, he said God is nonbinary," Paxton told supporters at the Allen rally. "This is a guy that's also using the Bible and the story of Mary and Jesus to justify late-term abortions."

Talarico maintains that abortion access is a priority. Still, he features abortion far less in his campaign materials than Allred did in his race two years ago against Cruz. Talarico has not run an ad focusing exclusively on abortion this year, and his campaign website devotes more real estate to combating corruption and helping to bring down the high costs of living. Allred ran several ads focusing on abortion, including with OB-GYNs and women who were denied abortions.

Texas maintains some of the most restrictive abortion laws in the country, barring the procedure in cases of rape and incest. The state has an exception if a pregnancy threatens a woman's life, but the stiff penalties have had a chilling effect on doctors attempting the procedure. Doctors can be prosecuted and face life in prison if they are found to have violated the abortion ban.

Activists supporting abortion access say they believe Democrats can still incorporate reproductive health into an economic message. Mini Timmaraju, president of Reproductive Freedom for All, noted an unplanned pregnancy could be financially ruinous for low-income families with high costs of child care, housing and food.

Timmaraju also said Paxton's past as attorney general enforcing the state's abortion ban gives him a record Democrats can run against, even if it isn't the top issue in this year's election.

"Ken Paxton is public enemy number one on abortion nationwide," Timmaraju said. "It would be a mistake not to go after him on this."

Amanda Zurawski, an abortion activist who was one of the top surrogates for Democrats in Texas and in the presidential race in 2024, said she didn't fault Talarico for focusing on the economy. She said she sympathized with focusing on the economy early in the race, with months remaining to discuss abortion.

Zurawski rose to national attention for suing Texas in 2023 after she was a denied an abortion to end her nonviable pregnancy. The complications from her pregnancy nearly killed her before doctors finally agreed to perform the procedure. She has since worked with a network of women with similar stories to advocate for abortion access.

"James has been extremely supportive of me and my work," Zurawski said, adding that she texted with Talarico shortly after the primary and he seemed open to working on reproductive issues together. "And so when he's ready to reach out if he wants to work together, I'll be very happy to support him."

Hiring slumped unexpectedly during July, as the economy shed 23,000 jobs

JOBS FROM A1

of gas prices, tariffs and predicted interest rates hikes, he said it would be "surprising" if those factors "didn't zap some of its strength."

During a campaign stop in Las Vegas this week, Trump claimed to be presiding over "the greatest economy we've ever had by far." The White House said early Friday that it remains on solid footing.

"The Trump industrial resurgence is on schedule," White House spokesman Kush Desai said in a statement, pointing to low unemployment claims and a small uptick in manufacturing jobs in July. "The Trump administration is focused on unleashing more private-sector job growth through President Trump's proven economic agenda of tax cuts, deregulation, and energy abundance."

Democrats, keying off polls showing that inflation-battered voters are losing patience with Trump's economic policies, also seized on the latest data.

"President Trump calls this the 'greatest economy we've ever had.' That might be true for his billionaire donors," Rep. Brendan Boyle (Pennsylvania), the top Democrat on the House Budget Committee, said in a statement. "For everyone else, Trump's tariff taxes and disastrous Iran war are raising costs, slowing growth, and hurting the job market."

The biggest takeaway from the report may be that a hiring slowdown has been brewing since spring as higher costs from tariffs and higher prices from delayed oil shipments weighed on employers' expansion plans. Meanwhile, job creation for this year's World Cup also disappointed and financial pressures appear to have driven significant summer job losses in local public schools.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

The unemployment rate ticked down, however, because the labor force has been steadily shrinking. Baby boomers hitting retirement age are exiting the workforce, but some working-age people have also been moving to the sidelines to wait for better job opportunities.

"A big part of this decline is demographics," said Joe Brusuelas, chief economist at RSM, a London tax and consulting firm. "It's the simple aging of the population."

In bad news for Republicans set to face midterm voters on Nov. 3, Friday's report also showed growth in average hourly wages cooling to the slowest pace since the pandemic. Wages rose to $37.62 an hour in June, and by 3.2 percent over the past year. Inflation data expected next week could show prices again growing faster than wages, another blow to consumers' pocketbooks.

Looking across sectors, the report shows health care continuing to lead job gains between June and July with 22,000 new positions. Construction payrolls fueled by the data center boom also grew. And the information sector and professional and business services added jobs — welcome news for frustrated college graduates.

But other industries continued to stagnate, shedding or barely adding jobs in July, in keeping with trends over the past 12 months.

Public K-12 schools and community colleges led job losses, cutting 50,000 positions. Omair Sharif, president of Inflation Insights, a financial research firm, said in an analyst's note that the big reduction is likely to be a reflection of falling student enrollment and rising costs, as well as the expiration of federal pandemic aid. But other economists said the declines may reflect seasonal data distortions related to school closures that should result in job gains in future months.

Leisure and hospitality shed 40,000 jobs, as World Cup hiring appeared weaker than anticipated, and restaurants, bars and entertainment venues reduced staff. The retail and finance sectors also shrank.

At least one group found a silver lining in the disappointing report: Wall Street traders are betting that the softer-than-expected labor market will lower the odds of Federal Reserve policymakers raising interest rates when they meet in September.

Last week, three Fed officials voted for a rate increase to combat stubborn inflation, a significant show of dissent for the Fed's decision to hold rates steady. Friday's jobs data could dampen pressure for a rate hike, analysts said, but the declining unemployment rate is likely to keep the Fed's focus on inflation data due next week.

"If those numbers come in hotter than expected, a cooler labor market may not be enough to quiet the calls for hikes inside the Fed, or lower expectations outside of it," said Ellen Zentner, chief economic strategist for Morgan Stanley Wealth Management.

Amid Friday's gloomy news, signs remain that the labor market is sturdy. Consumer spending remains healthy. New unemployment benefit claims last week came in at low levels, according to another Labor Department report released Thursday. And U.S.-based employers announced just 33,429 job cuts in July, the lowest monthly total in two years, according to a separate report published this week by the outplacement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas.

The lack of churn in the labor market has puzzled economists, who typically expect layoffs to increase during periods of weak hiring. Many analysts say Trump's immigration restrictions, including deportations and the U.S.-Mexico border closure, have reduced workforce growth, and so fewer jobs are needed to keep the unemployment rate steady.

Economists expect a late-summer hit from the administration's termination of temporary protected status for hundreds of thousands of immigrants from Haiti, a move that has triggered mass layoffs.

"There's just nothing that's been typical about the post-pandemic economy," said Diane Swonk, chief economist at KPMG economist. "Any labor market that's healthy has a healthy level of churn. But this labor market keeps defying the usual rules of economics."

Andrew Ackerman and Luis Melgar contributed to this report.

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P 6x21

THE WORLD

ATHIT PERAWONGMETHA/REUTERS

The wife of one of the five teachers and staff killed during a school shooing in Thailand on Friday is consoled.

Seven killed and more than 20 are injured in Thailand school shooting

BY JOSHUA YANG

Authorities say teen killed his two grandparents, five others

A 14-year-old student opened fire on seven people and wounded more than 20 on Friday in one of Thailand's deadliest school shootings in years.

The shooter killed his two grandparents at the home they shared, then proceeded to his high school just outside Bangkok, where he killed five teachers and staff, according to Thai authorities.

The shooter shot himself at the scene and died shortly after his evacuation to the hospital, Thai officials said.

The student had previously flaunted the gun, which was owned by his grandfather, on Instagram in April, according to authorities.

Twenty-three people were wounded in the attack, with nine in critical condition, officials added.

The student's motivation for the mass killing was unclear; a close friend told police the shooter had been under stress from his studies.

After searching the suspected gunman's home, police told local media that he had been watching videos of school shootings in the United States on his computer in recent days.

The shooting is one of the deadliest attacks on a school in Thailand since 2022, when a 34-year-old former police officer killed 37 people, including 24 children, at a nursery in northeastern Thailand. Following that attack, Thai lawmakers pledged gun reforms, though comprehensive changes have yet to be codified.

In the aftermath of Friday's shooting, Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said he would introduce a new firearms control law that would allow only public officials on duty to carry guns.

Thailand boasts the highest civilian gun ownership rate in Southeast Asia, with around 15 guns per 100 people, according to a 2017 estimate from the Small Arms Survey.

Senate passes bill that will intensify sanctions against Russia

BY NOAH ROBERTSON AND THEODORIC MEYER

The Senate on Friday overwhelmingly approved a bill to intensify sanctions on Russia's wartime economy, in a long-awaited victory for congressional supporters of Ukraine.

The 86-to-11 vote capped more than a year and a half of negotiations around the legislation, during which even some supportive lawmakers doubted its prospects.

It now heads to the House, where lawmakers have already left Washington for the August recess.

Members of both parties have largely credited the bill's survival to the persistence of Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina), who championed the measure up until the final hours of his life. Graham died from a heart condition in July, shortly after returning from a trip to Ukraine.

The bill would allow the Trump administration to impose up to 100 percent tariffs on the top five purchasers of Russian oil and gas and other countries that help circumvent existing sanctions on Russia's energy sector. It would also extend sanctions on Iran, a White House priority that was tacked on to the legislation.

Supporters of the measure argue the bill could cripple the Kremlin's main source of revenue and limit its ability to wage its war in Ukraine, now in its fifth year. They assert the financial penalties, in addition to Ukraine's recent success in striking deep into Russia, could push Russian President Vladimir Putin to seek a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

Sen. James E. Risch (R-Idaho), the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said on the Senate floor that the bill would "cut off the flow of cash that powers Putin's war machine."

The Biden administration previously enacted numerous rounds of sanctions against Moscow, cutting its economy off from the Western financial system and seizing the assets of Russian oligarchs. The penalties have limited the Kremlin's options to continue financing the war but haven't halted the fighting.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Connecticut), who led efforts to pass the bill with Graham before his death, called the new sanctions the "most consequential" that have been enacted since Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022.

Blumenthal and the bill's other supporters described it as an effort to affirm U.S. support for Ukraine. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-New York) said the bill would send "an unmistakable message to Moscow that America will back Ukraine to the hilt."

But some House Democrats who support Ukraine have said they will oppose the legislation, arguing that it hands President Donald Trump too much authority to impose new tariffs. It is unclear whether their concerns are deep enough to halt the bill.

Rep. Gregory Meeks (New York), the top Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, has called the bill a "Trojan horse" for economic levies that the Trump administration has "repeatedly abused." In a statement Friday, Meeks called for the bill to be further refined.

Blumenthal acknowledged his colleagues' opposition in a news conference after Friday's vote. Still, he argued that the bill was Congress's only realistic opportunity to tighten sanctions on Russia and urged House lawmakers to back the legislation.

"Time is not on our side," Blumenthal said.

After a late push from Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-Georgia), U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer committed in writing that the administration would not seek to impose tariffs on countries beyond the top five importers of Russian oil or natural gas, subject to the restrictions in the legislation.

But the Senate defeated an amendment to the bill from Sens. Rand Paul (R-Kentucky) and Ron Wyden (D-Oregon) to strip the power to impose tariffs, which Paul argued could amount to "the largest tax increase imposed by a Republican Congress."

> *"It will not bring peace to Ukraine, but rather will deliberately make American families poorer by increasing tariffs, which are nothing but a tax on imported goods."*
>
> **Senator Rand Paul (R-Kentucky)**

"It will not bring peace to Ukraine, but rather will deliberately make American families poorer by increasing tariffs, which are nothing but a tax on imported goods," Paul said on the Senate floor.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has personally urged lawmakers to support the legislation, visiting the Capitol last week to attend Graham's funeral. After meeting with senators and urging them to back the legislation, Zelensky watched an initial vote to advance the measure from the Senate chamber.

Trump has wavered in his support for Ukraine but has recently spoken warmly of Zelensky and said their meetings were productive. The White House has committed in writing that it will support the bill.

DIGEST

CONGO

Congo hold passengers into quarantine

Congolese health authorities held nearly 200 boat passengers in quarantine near Kinshasa on Thursday after one traveler who was previously aboard the boat died with symptoms matching the Ebola virus.

Congo has been battling an Ebola outbreak since May that has been deemed the fastest in history in terms of transmission, with confirmed cases reaching 4,000, including over 1,800 deaths, according to Dr. Jean Kaseya, Director-General of Africa CDC.

The passenger had become sick and disembarked nearly three weeks ago in Pimu, in the province of Mongala, more than 600 miles from Kinshasa along the Congo River, Kaseya said Thursday, adding that the capital has no confirmed Ebola case. The passenger later died.

Authorities did not give the current location of the boat other than to say that it was near the capital. They did not say if the nearly 200 remaining passengers were being held aboard the ship or in some location on land, nor how long they would be held. But they said they were awaiting test results.

Ebola is highly contagious and spreads in the human population through contact with bodily fluids such as vomit, blood or semen, and with contaminated surfaces and materials such as bedding and clothing.

— Associated Press

PAKISTAN

Pakistan military airlifts victims' bodies

Pakistani military helicopters on Thursday airlifted the bodies of five climbers from the snow-covered slopes of Broad Peak nearly a week after an avalanche swept away a 10-member international expedition, officials said.

Irfan Arshad Khan, president of the Alpine Club of Pakistan, said the remains of the climbers killed in the July 31 avalanche were being transferred to a military hospital in the northern city of Skardu.

Three bodies were brought off the mountain on Aug. 1. Thursday's airlift raised the number of recovered bodies to eight, including renowned British-Nepali climber Nirmal Purja. Two climbers remain missing and the search is ongoing following what the Alpine Club described as one of Pakistan's deadliest mountaineering disasters.

The bodies of Purja, Chinese climber Zhong Wang, Nepali climbers Nima Sherpa, Gyalu Sherpa and Kilu Sherpa were flown from the base camp of Broad Peak to the air base in Skardu before being transported to the hospital, regional authorities said.

The international team of climbers came from Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, China, Britain and the United States. The bodies will be flown to Pakistan's capital Islamabad after coordination with the embassies of the climbers' home countries, officials said.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar this week expressed condolences to the victims' families, saying he was deeply saddened by the tragedy and that Pakistan remained committed to the recovery operation in coordination with the Nepal, Oman, U.K. and U.S. embassies.

— Associated Press

GREEK

Greek court orders murderer jailed

A Greek court ordered that a 26-year-old Afghan boxer accused of killing a Scottish woman whose body was found in a suitcase in Athens be held in jail pending trial after he refused to enter a plea on Thursday, legal and police sources said.

The man, accused of manslaughter, robbery and illegal gun possession, exercised his right to silence and did not respond to the charges as toxicological test results are still pending, the legal source said. The body of Elisabeth Jane Ross, a 38-year-old certified psychotherapist and volunteer aid worker, was found on July 18 in a suitcase on an abandoned construction site after she had been missing for three days.

The suspect, who police officials describe as a professional boxer from Afghanistan who was granted asylum in Greece, was arrested on Sunday. He has denied wrongdoing, police officials told Reuters.

He told police earlier this week that he found Ross' body in an apartment bathroom, panicked, placed it in a suitcase and tried to dispose of it, police officials said.

A post-mortem examination could not determine the cause of death due to decomposition but the report writers did not rule out asphyxiation, a police source said.

— Associated Press

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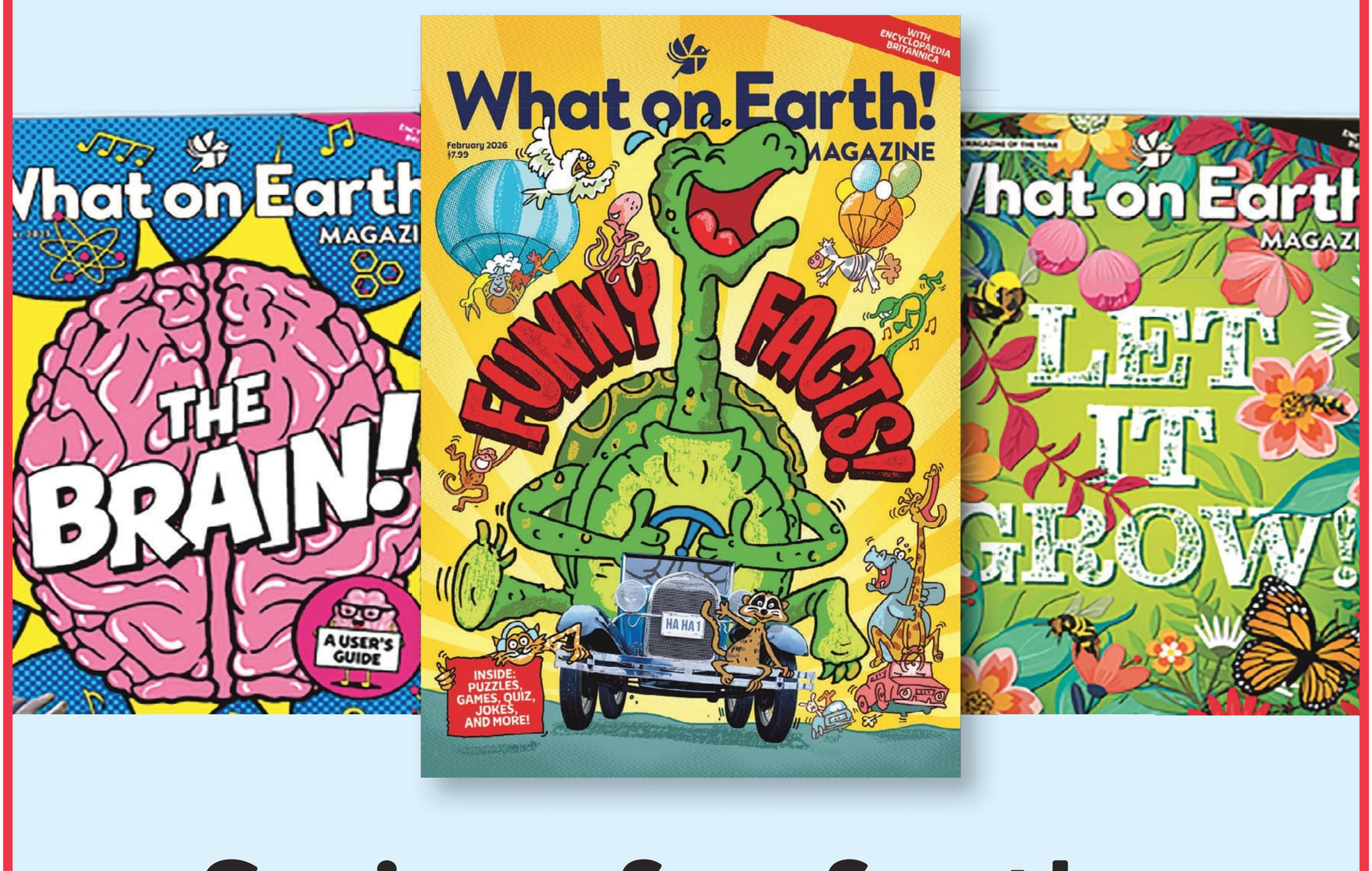

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Why a Justice Department prosecution of Fauci could face court challenges

The DOJ faces competing pressures as it decides on what course to take

BY MARK BERMAN

NATHAN HOWARD/REUTERS

Anthony S. Fauci repeatedly took the Fifth Amendment last week at an appearance before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

NATHAN HOWARD/REUTERS

Committee Chairman Rand Paul (R-Kentucky) presided over a vote Thursday that resulted in Fauci being held in contempt of Congress.

A Senate committee's vote this week to hold Anthony S. Fauci in contempt of Congress hands the Justice Department two thorny questions: Will the agency prosecute the 85-year-old infectious-disease scientist, and could it win such a case in court?

The contempt vote does not automatically mean Fauci will face charges, and if that does happen, legal analysts say there are hurdles and potential weakness for any possible case.

The 8-7 vote centered on Fauci's recent appearance before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, during which the former public health official repeatedly invoked the Fifth Amendment and declined to answer questions.

Fauci said committee Chairman Rand Paul (R-Kentucky) — who has long assailed the scientist over his handling of the coronavirus pandemic and called for him to be jailed — was trying to trap him in a misstep. Paul said Fauci had no legitimate reason to avoid questions, since President Joe Biden granted him a preemptive pardon before leaving office last year.

Deciding whether Fauci should actually face criminal charges that could land him behind bars, though, is up to the Justice Department. Its leader, Todd Blanche, just faced a grueling confirmation fight, with senators of both parties pressing him to resist politicizing the department.

Carlos Uriarte, who was assistant attorney general for legislative affairs during the Biden administration, said lawmakers routinely refer matters to the Justice Department — but that doesn't mean prosecutions follow.

"DOJ has a lot of discretion in terms of what investigations it pursues, regardless of what steps Congress takes," said Uriarte, now a partner at the firm Morrison Foerster.

Federal law says contempt of Congress cases must be referred to a U.S. attorney, "whose duty it shall be to bring the matter before the grand jury."

But the Justice Department has concluded in the past that presenting these cases to a grand jury is optional.

In a 1984 legal opinion for the agency, then-Assistant Attorney General Theodore B. Olson — who later served as solicitor general under President George W. Bush — wrote: "Congress does not have the statutory or constitutional authority to require a particular case to be referred to the grand jury."

The Justice Department said Friday in a statement about the Fauci contempt case that it had "received the document, we are reviewing it, and will work with the Senate accordingly."

The Fauci case, though, is far from typical. It involves a longtime health official who became the face of the American response to the pandemic, celebrated by many Democrats and vilified by conservatives.

In a letter Thursday to Blanche and Jeanine Pirro, the U.S. attorney for D.C., Paul wrote that Fauci had improperly invoked the Fifth Amendment, which protects against self-incrimination.

"Dr. Fauci cannot have any reasonable fear of federal prosecution because he received a sweeping pardon," Paul wrote.

Senators asked Fauci many questions about "exclusively federal subject matter," Paul wrote, involving "conduct for which the pardon eliminates federal jeopardy."

David Schertler, an attorney for Fauci, said there was "absolutely no basis for a criminal contempt charge against Dr. Fauci."

"His assertion of his Fifth Amendment rights was completely appropriate and justified given Senator Paul's many explicit statements that his clear intention was to see Dr. Fauci 'behind bars,'" Schertler said in a statement.

Fauci's is not the first politically charged contempt case of recent years. Stephen K. Bannon and Peter Navarro — top advisers to President Donald Trump — were held in contempt in separate episodes by the House of Representatives during the Biden administration for defying subpoenas from the House Jan. 6 committee.

Bannon and Navarro were both prosecuted, convicted and jailed. Two other Trump aides — Mark Meadows and Daniel Scavino Jr. — were also held in contempt by the House, but the Justice Department declined to prosecute them.

Trump, who has criticized Fauci, cited the Bannon and Navarro cases after the contempt vote this week in suggesting the doctor should be prosecuted.

During Trump's second term, the Justice Department has shown an appetite for taking aim at his foes, including former FBI director James B. Comey, New York Attorney General Letitia James (D) and former Federal Reserve Chair Jerome H. Powell.

Federal prosecutors could take a few different routes with the Fauci case, including deciding not to bring it to a grand jury at all, pursuing a contempt case as Paul wants and seeking entirely different charges against Fauci.

If prosecutors proceed with a criminal case against Fauci, a grand jury could reject it. That has repeatedly happened during Trump's second term, including earlier this year when a federal grand jury in D.C. refused to indict six Democratic lawmakers who had recorded a video saying military service members could disobey illegal commands.

A case against Fauci would risk genuine legal peril for him. If Fauci is convicted on a misdemeanor count of contempt of Congress, he could be jailed for at least 30 days and up to a year. But legal analysts said the case faces several hurdles.

The resolution finding Fauci in contempt was approved by a Senate committee on a party-line vote, but it was never presented to the full Senate, where it is not clear it would have passed. Some legal analysts suggest Fauci's attorneys could try to challenge a prosecution in the case on that basis alone.

Stanley Brand, who represented Navarro in his contempt case, said that under the statute, the full Senate needs to review such cases when it is in session.

Paul's decision to send the case to DOJ without the full Senate involved "is just fatal to the case," said Brand, who previously worked as general counsel for the House of Representatives.

Brand said bypassing the full Senate and sending it from the committee vote on to the Justice Department is "like flushing it down the toilet."

Others were not certain that this would doom a prosecution of Fauci, though they expected his attorneys would at least raise the issue if the case proceeds.

"It's possible that's a procedural defense he could raise," said Amanda Vaughn, an attorney at Fairmark Partners, who was part of the teams at the U.S. attorney's office in D.C. that prosecuted Navarro and Bannon. "But there's not a lot of case law on it, as to whether bypassing the full Senate would be okay."

Another unusual element in the case is Fauci's pardon.

Shortly before leaving office, Biden granted pardons to Fauci and others who he said faced the threat of "unjustified and politically motivated prosecutions" by Trump's second administration.

The language of the pardon states that it covered actions stretching back more than a decade, including Fauci's work on the pandemic response. Paul wrote to Blanche and Pirro that the broad nature of the pardon negated Fauci's need for the Fifth Amendment.

"It is difficult to conceive of a more comprehensive grant of federal immunity, and it forecloses the ordinary basis for Fifth Amendment protection for any topics covered by the Committee," Paul wrote.

Legal experts, though, noted that the pardon was not boundless, in part because it only covered actions through the date it was issued in January 2025.

"A fundamental rule about pardons is that the president can only pardon events which occur before the moment that the pardon issues," said Frank O. Bowman III, an emeritus law professor at the University of Missouri and an expert in presidential clemency.

"A pardon does not cover anything after its issuance," he said. "The person pardoned could certainly be prosecuted for, for example, any false statements or perjury that he committed after the date of the pardon."

Presidential clemency is also limited to federal offenses and does not protect against state charges.

Three Republican attorneys general — in Florida, Louisiana and West Virginia — announced this week that they were subpoenaing Fauci, and a fourth in Oklahoma ordered an investigation into him there.

The contempt resolution said Fauci had waived his right to invoke the Fifth Amendment by giving "opening testimony on subject matter pertinent to the questions under inquiry."

This is not the first time lawmakers have made such an argument.

In 2014, the House of Representatives voted to hold ex-Internal Revenue Service official Lois Lerner in contempt after she made an opening statement at a hearing and later invoked the Fifth Amendment. The following year, the U.S. attorney for D.C. at the time, Ronald C. Machen Jr., said his office was declining to bring that case before a grand jury.

David I. Schoen, an attorney who represented Bannon in his contempt case, said Fauci's opening statement could prove an issue for his defense.

"I would make the argument, if I were on the prosecution side, that that is a statement denying the charges against him," he said.

Schoen was also critical of Fauci for invoking the Fifth Amendment when pressed during the hearing on relatively mundane topics, including when Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Missouri) asked him about the color of his tie.

"The Fifth Amendment is a vitally important part of the Constitution," Schoen said. "On the other hand, it shouldn't be abused."

Bowman said that technically, Fauci could not invoke the Fifth Amendment in those areas "because the answers to those questions couldn't reasonably incriminate him." But people who are invoking the Fifth Amendment often do so broadly, he added, because defense lawyers tell them not to answer anything to avoid getting "drawn into question-by-question justifications of why you answered this and didn't answer that."

MATT MCCLAIN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Stephen K. Bannon after appearing in federal court on Nov. 15, 2021, after being charged with contempt of Congress.

OPINION

The Washington Post
AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

EDITORIALS

Airport ICE capades are a strange way to keep DHS out of the headlines

AT THE NATIONAL Governors Association's summer meeting, Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin reiterated the pledges he made during his confirmation hearings in March. "Let's work to get the worst of the worst off the streets, and then you won't see me in your cities and states like you do as much," Mullin told governors last week, referring to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency he oversees. "In fact, you probably won't even see us at all."

That is a reassuring message, but it doesn't apply at airports.

To hit the White House's quota of roughly 2,000 arrests per day, ICE has ramped up its presence at travel hubs. Agents appear to be casting a wide net to pick up anyone without legal status.

These travelers are not the "worst of the worst." They are often people who have overstayed their visas and may be in legal limbo while awaiting an extension or another form of legal status.

> Gate agents have blocked immigration authorities trying to board planes without a judicial warrant.

ICE instructs officers to nab people primarily at security checkpoints, but videos have shown officers detaining others in boarding areas and on jet bridges. In Dallas recently, a Southwest gate agent blocked ICE officers from boarding a plane without a judicial warrant. The airline has taken similar action at least half a dozen times in recent weeks, according to Wall Street Journal.

Mullin insists he wants to keep his department out of the headlines and wind down the theatrics that led to the removal of his predecessor, Kristi L. Noem. The airport ICE capades are a strange way of showing it.

Meanwhile, the agency's approval ratings continue to slide. Most Americans say they have little or no confidence in ICE. Only 22 percent say they have "a great deal of confidence" in the agency, according to a YouGov/Economist poll last month. There is a large partisan divide, with MAGA Republicans accounting for most pro-ICE sentiment. Only 12 percent of independents have a "great deal" of confidence in the agency.

Mullin was right in the spring to pivot toward arresting dangerous criminals. Airport arrests are a relic of January's excesses. They won't help restore public trust, nor will they make the public safer.

Russia keeps testing NATO. The lack of response will embolden Putin.

AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE agencies now assess that Vladimir Putin may try to directly test NATO within a few years, with scenarios ranging from cyberattacks to a limited land incursion. But the Russian president is already probing the alliance's defenses and resolve. It's well past time to respond.

A drone carrying explosives turned up near a runway at the Leipzig airport in Germany on Tuesday. A Russian missile flew 55 miles into Poland and detonated in a field last week.

Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russia has been rattling its nuclear saber, and the din has been effective. President Joe Biden and his top advisers agonized over sending Kyiv the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), fearing that such a move might ignite World War III.

By October 2022, after intercepting Russian commanders discussing the use of tactical nuclear weapons, U.S. intelligence put the odds of nuclear escalation at as high as 50 percent. That led Biden to impose restrictions on donated weapons, limit their use against targets inside Russia and withhold targeting intelligence.

Ukraine's resolve pulled the United States along. First came the limited-range Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS). Long-range variants followed.

Western intelligence agencies now provide targeting information to Ukraine, which uses its own homegrown drones and missiles to strike deep inside Russia. There have been no mushroom clouds.

DAN BASHAKOV/AP

Russian missiles hit a warehouse in Kyiv on Wednesday.

Russia obviously fears nuclear escalation with NATO, but it may not fear NATO itself.

A series of incidents preceded the missile in Poland and the drone in Germany, including foiled attacks on rail lines and swarms of drones flying deep into NATO airspace. Each incursion has a thin veneer of deniability but is almost certainly the Kremlin's handiwork.

Given that these episodes keep occurring, diplomatic démarches are clearly not cutting it. But how does NATO respond unambiguously without climbing the escalation ladder? The right answer is to take the leash off Ukraine.

Visiting Washington last week, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky asked President Donald Trump to persuade Elon Musk to lift restrictions on using Starlink, SpaceX's satellite communications system, to help guide strikes inside Russia. With the global supply of interceptors running dangerously low, Ukraine needs to be able to hit Russian launchers before they fire their ballistic missiles.

Trump reportedly told Zelensky he would talk to Musk and consider the request. Musk acquiesced to a previous Ukrainian request to block Russians from using Starlink over Ukrainian territory. Given the extent of SpaceX's business with the U.S. government, an ask from the White House would not be dismissed lightly.

Russia has always probed its adversaries. Every "stray" drone or missile that goes unanswered encourages greater risk-taking. Doing nothing, paradoxically, is the more dangerous option.

Wisconsin taxpayers will flee if Francesca Hong becomes governor

FRANCESCA HONG, the front-runner in Tuesday's Democratic primary for Wisconsin governor, has made squeezing high earners a central theme of her campaign. Like most socialists, she is in denial about the costs and consequences of her proposals.

To fund "free" child care, state-run grocery stores and more health care subsidies — among other social spending — the 37-year-old state legislator plans to raise state income taxes a full percentage point on couples making at least $431,000 and individuals making more than $323,000. She would levy another 1 percent on "millionaires and large corporations," bringing their top state tax rate to almost 9 percent.

This might sound fine to a taxpayer who doesn't make a million dollars, but Wisconsin — like every other state — relies on wealthy taxpayers to support state infrastructure, public schools and social programs. The top 5 percent of earners pay about 40 percent of the state's net income taxes.

At a primary debate last week, moderators posed a fair question: "What if all the millionaires leave the state?"

Hong responded: "You know, uh, discussing that hypothetical is, um, a little bit, uh — I'm confused about that." She went on to say that millionaires would be able to "live, work and thrive" because of her other policies.

JOSHUA LOTT/GETTY IMAGES

Wisconsin gubernatorial candidate Francesca Hong speaks in Milwaukee on Aug. 2.

But high earners in America's Dairyland will take only so much badgering before they relocate. Wisconsin already has the second-highest top income tax rate in the Midwest, trailing only Minnesota's 9.85 percent. And Wisconsin businesses face the third-highest rates in the region, behind Minnesota and Illinois. When businesses leave, they take with them not only tax revenue but also jobs and investment.

For now, Wisconsin's population is holding steady. But last year each of its bordering neighbors — especially Minnesota and Illinois — saw more people move out than in.

This is far from the only knock on Hong's readiness to govern a major state. She campaigned last weekend with far-left streamer Hasan Piker, who has called "Hamas a thousand times better" than Israel and said "America deserved 9/11."

Hong also has a history of weird social media posts that she's now trying to walk back, from musing about defunding the police to canceling Thanksgiving and claiming that "old white people" at a Culver's fast-casual restaurant put her "on the verge" of an "anxiety attack."

But Hong's bad economic ideas should also matter to Wisconsin voters. Recent elections seem to suggest that Democratic voters no longer fear labels such as "socialist" and are more interested in tearing down the party's establishment. A better strategy to combat extreme policies is to explain the damage they will cause.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BRANDON BELL/GETTY IMAGES

An Alamo Drafthouse theater in Austin in 2024.

I'm a senior. I'll wait to stream 'The Odyssey.'

The headline of Will Leitch's Aug. 1 column, "The real reason movie attendance has dropped? Grandpa.," grabbed my attention. I am an 87-year-old grandma and I stopped going to movie theaters about five years ago. Today's theaters are challenging to negotiate: Declining physical prowess, waning vision, the need for frequent trips to the john and handicapped seats causing severe neck strain are all reasons I now avoid them.

Instead, I opt to stream or watch movies on cable, where I can enjoy them from the comfort of my sofa or recliner. This way, I can hit the pause button to get a snack or answer the phone.

That's why my first reaction to all the hoopla around "The Odyssey" was wondering when and where it will stream.

Jean Jensen, *Alexandria*

Let me point out the real reason Generation Xers and baby boomers don't frequent movie theaters. It's not that we're acting like "there's nothing out there to see," like Will Leitch suggested. Quite often, seniors are just unable to go because of health issues or mobility challenges. In my younger years, I was an avid moviegoer. There wasn't a single good movie I'd miss. Now, it's just plain harder to go.

Also, seniors spending a lot of time on the phone is often a reflection of the social isolation they live with. So spare a kind thought for the grandpas and grandmas who would much rather be at the movies and not staring at their iPhones, iPads or TVs.

Sandhya Gandhi, *Rockville*

Seniors are not going to the movies because of the cost. When the cost of admission is $20 or more for me and my wife, including senior discounts, I look elsewhere for my entertainment.

Rob Rudick, *Takoma Park*

After your working years, keep up your strengths

I retired (albeit reluctantly) from the workforce at the vintage age of 78, so the Aug. 2 Business article "What retirees wish someone had told them ahead of time" resonated with me.

I especially agreed with Deborah Buckwalter's insight in the article that we should stay socially and cognitively engaged as we age. I have volunteered at the Phillips Collection since 2009, and that experience has been especially gratifying in retirement. The most valuable aspect of volunteering has been engaging with visitors in conversations about art.

I also agree that physical activity can also be a new source of structure and meaning at this stage in life. I try to walk about two miles several times a week either in Rock Creek Park or, in inclement weather, in the hallways of my co-op apartment building, and I swim laps every week using a kickboard. It is gratifying, both psychically and mentally, to accomplish these activities in my eighth decade on the planet.

Bottom line to future retirees: Build on and adjust the strengths you developed in your working years as the foundation for a successful retirement.

Lois A. Engel, *Washington*

Don't give up tech — hold officers accountable

The Aug. 4 front-page article "How rogue officers used a nationwide camera network for stalking" exposed the misuse of law enforcement technology by some officers. The reporting should be a reminder that every public safety tool must be matched by equally strong accountability.

The lesson, however, should not be to retreat from technology. License-plate cameras and other investigative tools have helped solve violent crimes, locate missing children and recover stolen vehicles. The real challenge for policymakers is to ensure these tools are governed by transparent rules that protect both public safety and individual liberty.

Police departments should implement mandatory supervisory approval for sensitive database searches, independent audits of every query, automatic alerts for suspicious use, criminal penalties for intentional misuse and annual public reports documenting compliance. Officers who abuse the systems betray the public's trust and should face swift discipline.

But the overwhelming majority of officers serve honorably. They deserve technology that helps them protect our communities and oversight that reinforces public confidence in their work.

Ernest E. Johnson, *Washington*

Fans are right to care about Ariana Grande

Monica Hesse argued in her Aug. 3 online column, "Is Ariana Grande's body any of our business?," that "she owes us, a bunch of strangers she'll never meet, absolutely nothing. She owes us, the fans who gave her a career, at least something."

When someone is not only a public figure but also, as Hesse noted, a woman who has defined beauty standards, her appearance is our business. Grande is a fabulous talent. Because fans love and care about her, they want her to be healthy. They were right to question Grande over her concerning change in appearance.

Grande said her withdrawal from an upcoming musical in London was to take a break from public scrutiny. I hope she is heading in a better direction and will now seek help.

Terri Oram, *Potomac*

Letter submissions

Send letters to letters@washpost.com.

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OPINION

EDITH PRITCHETT

THE PHONE VORTEX
DISTRACTIONS WHEN YOU'RE ON A DEADLINE
WATCH A 20-PART TIKTOK SERIES
this one ♡
We scrub up nice
DISCOVERING MY ROOMMATE WAS ACTUALLY THREE CHILDREN IN A TRENCH COAT
TRY TO WORK OUT IF A HIGH SCHOOL ACQUAINTANCE HAS BROKEN UP WITH HER BOYFRIEND
begin again
Dollhouse (haunted)
BID ON SOMETHING YOU DON'T NEED ON EBAY
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Can-do attitude :)
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CHECK OUT THE LINKEDIN OF A GUY WHO GHOSTED YOU BACK IN 2016
CHECK YOUR ASTROLOGICAL COMPATIBILITY WITH A NEW DATE
7%
The stars recoil!
EDITH

FAREED ZAKARIA

Democrats need to face their real liability

Democrats are facing a dilemma and Michigan's Senate primary perfectly illustrated it. Abdul El-Sayed, the charismatic progressive, defeated Rep. Haley Stevens, the establishment-backed moderate. The energy was unquestionably with El-Sayed. But a Washington Post analysis finds his support was concentrated in the state's most educated counties and college towns; Stevens did better in many rural and lower-income areas. The dilemma: The left has the passion, but the middle still has the votes Democrats need to win in general elections.

The progressive answer is that Democrats can solve this by becoming more economically populist — attacking billionaires, expanding benefits and thus appealing to the working class. But these ideas don't appeal to the actual working class. Among Democrats, a Pew survey shows 41 percent of college graduates say they like politicians who call themselves democratic socialists, compared with only 26 percent of those without degrees. Upper-income Democrats are also much more favorable toward democratic socialists than lower-income Democrats, 40 percent to 24 percent.

Democrats have spent years dreaming of a working-class restoration. President Joe Biden mounted the largest effort to court them with economics in decades. His administration poured hundreds of billions of dollars into infrastructure, factories, clean energy and semiconductors, much of it flowing to Republican counties. Yet in the next election, 2024, Donald Trump won voters without college degrees and those earning less than $50,000 while making gains among working-class Hispanic and Black voters. Over the last 30 years, the Democrats have moved left on economics — Obama was to the left of Clinton, and Biden was to the left of Obama — and in that same period, the working class has steadily abandoned the party.

The lesson is not that economics don't matter. But the Democratic Party's problem is not that it is seen as too centrist on economics. Democrats routinely lead Republicans on issues like health care and, even now, the cost of living. Their liabilities are cultural and social issues — crime, immigration, the border and the "woke" agenda. One example: According to a poll by the Argument, among voters who disapproved of Trump but still leaned toward voting Republican, the GOP led on trust over crime 47 percent to 1 percent.

When Democrats come under pressure, they find it much easier to move left on economics than toward the center on culture. If they speak plainly and say that the border must be controlled, repeat offenders punished, and standards of merit defended, or that biological sex matters, they risk revolts from activists, advocacy groups and highly educated staffers. So instead, Democrats offer a larger subsidy, a new benefit or a fiercer attack on billionaires while leaving untouched the cultural attitudes that alienate many voters.

The evidence suggests this is backward. One study tested Democratic shifts across 29 policy issues and found that the largest electoral gains tended to come from moving toward the middle on social and cultural questions. Another report found that working-class voters placed far more emphasis than liberal college graduates on securing the border, reducing crime and adding police. Liberal college graduates placed far more emphasis on resisting authoritarianism, protecting trans rights and abortion access, and fighting climate change.

JULIA DEMAREE NIKHINSON

Abdul El-Sayed speaks in Detroit on Aug. 5 after winning the Democratic Senate nomination.

The divide widened not because working-class voters simply lurched to the right, but rather because college-educated Democrats moved left further and faster. According to an analysis by American politics scholar Nicholas Jacobs, in 2000, only about 8 percent of both Democrats and working-class voters favored increasing immigration. By 2020, 48 percent of Democrats did, compared with 24 percent of working-class voters. A three-point gap over abortion in 1980 became a 30-point gap by 2024. Large gaps also opened up over religion, family and trust in government not to waste taxpayer dollars.

Trump understands the political force of this estrangement. Listen to what he rails against in his campaign rallies: transgender athletes, DEI bureaucracies, elite universities, crime and an out-of-control border. He knows that these issues hit voters in their gut.

The answer is not for Democrats to imitate Trump, abandon minorities or become reactionary. It is to stop imagining that Medicare-for-all and wealth taxes will restore the New Deal coalition. That world and that coalition are gone. The good news is that the party already has a formidable modern coalition: college-educated voters, women, minorities, younger Americans and many working- and middle-class voters in metropolitan America. These voters want not a socialist revolution but effective liberal government that delivers — affordable housing, good schools, accessible health care, safe streets, a controlled border, legal immigration and economic growth. And perhaps this will help Democrats make inroads with the rest of the working class again, too.

Democrats need to show culturally moderate voters that liberalism can distinguish compassion from permissiveness, openness from disorder, and equality from ideological conformity. Michigan showed where the party's energy lies for its base — the fraction of Americans who vote in primaries. The test is whether Democrats can turn that energy into a politics of common sense that appeals to the rest of the country.

WILL LEITCH

In an age of madness, 'Last Week Tonight' makes me feel sane

The best comedians are more than funny: They have a way of making you feel like their jokes are private ones that only they, and you, individually, understand. A great joke is like a nudge in the ribs — a way for you and the joke-teller to stand outside the madness of the world as if you're the only two reasonable people left. That kind of comedian — no matter what they're talking about — can express something you didn't even know you were thinking. They can feel like your best friend, sitting in the back of class with you, tossing spit wads and cracking wise. Like the two of you are in it together.

Which is how I found myself the other day watching a week of episodes of "General Hospital" — an ABC soap opera I didn't know was still on the air — just so I could see John Oliver get slapped. It's like he was doing it just for me.

I could explain to you why it was a delight to see an absurdly hair-dyed Oliver playing "Z," the director of the World Security Bureau, in a three-episode arc — and why I can't wait to see him play an entirely different character on "Days of Our Lives" next week — but honestly, like many great jokes, you sort of had to be there. But trust me: It was brilliant. Just about everything Oliver does is.

Oliver and his HBO show, "Last Week Tonight," are often lumped in with other late-night fare, particularly since he hosted a podcast called "Strike Force Five" with fellow hosts Stephen Colbert, Jimmy Kimmel, Jimmy Fallon and Seth Meyers during the 2023 Hollywood writers strike and appeared on Colbert's final CBS show in May. But I'm not sure "Last Week Tonight" is a late-night talk show at all.

Sure, there's a studio audience, and Oliver sits at a desk. But there are no guests, band or interview segment. What the show is — and Oliver is clear about this — is a newsmagazine, and it does excellent investigative journalism. It just also happens to be hilarious. That it is able to do these two difficult things simultaneously seems like magic.

Oliver and his staff of Emmy-winning writers have figured out that, in this age of tumult, the wisecracking kid in the back of class can also be the person who reassures you that you're not crazy. That's how I feel when I watch "Last Week Tonight," like I'm not imagining all the madness in the world, in America, in this administration. It makes me feel sane and — most important — like I'm not alone. That the show can do this while featuring a cute (and litigation-resistant!) mascot named Mr. Nutterbutter, and doing things like donating Russell Crowe's jockstrap to a Blockbuster store in Anchorage before getting it back and auctioning it off to support public media (again, you had to be there!) is a gift from the universe. As the world careens, Oliver and his silly, deadly serious show offer safe harbor.

Much of this is because the show does its journalism exquisitely well, thanks largely to its format. A recent episode featured a 26-minute segment on the Trump family's cryptocurrency ventures that laid out just how nefarious these are, and how much money the Trumps are getting from them, and it did so clearly, straightforwardly and devastatingly. I don't think it's possible to watch the segment and not consider the story a massive scandal. Other journalists have pursued this reporting — including at this newspaper last month — but "Last Week Tonight" clarified *and* magnified the issue, while still featuring some great jokes.

The show has been doing this work for years, but it hit a new stride in the second Trump administration. Much of the show's success is due to Oliver's skill as a performer, but it also benefits from Oliver's avoiding the old trick of scoring political points, then retreating to "Hey, I'm just a comedian, don't take this so seriously!" when called out on it. This was long Jon Stewart's escape hatch at "The Daily Show," and Oliver doesn't take it: "Last Week Tonight" is funny, but it's also seeking real truth and pushing for real change. It refuses to give up, and it won't allow you to, either.

Last week, Oliver announced that he had reupped his show through 2027, ensuring it will continue on HBO through its 14th season. This was rightfully seen as good news. But it should be noted that Oliver usually extends for three years, not one, and he admitted the court-paused merger of Warner Bros. Discovery, which owns HBO, and Paramount Skydance has him in "total denial."

Oliver, unlike Kimmel and Colbert, hasn't been much of a target for President Donald Trump; I like to think it's because the show is too intelligent and absurdist for him to understand. (It's also possible he just doesn't have HBO.) But Oliver seems to know he might not dance between the raindrops forever: If the merger does go through, he and his show could be the next target. That such a thing is even conceivable is an indictment of our times. Best for Oliver to keep the extensions to one year at a time until we know whether he — and the rest of us — will make it through this.

I have never met John Oliver. We are not actually friends. He is not making his show specifically for me. But it *feels* that way, and if you're a fan, I bet it does to you, too. In a time when many have never felt more powerless, there is strength in being the wisenheimer in the back of the room, tossing spit wads … and always, always telling the truth. I'd be lost without that. We all would.

Suspended priest in Grenada turns to calypso to deliver message

Dánica Coto and Anselm Gibbs
Associated Press

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO — A suspended Catholic priest on a tiny Caribbean island is embracing calypso to make his voice heard on topics including Gaza and sexual abuse within the church.

Father Gerard Paul, who hails from Grenada, can no longer officiate masses, funerals, weddings or baptisms after repeatedly criticizing the church and clergy. But that hasn't stopped him from preaching via the lilting rhythms of calypso, an Afro-Caribbean music genre known for its witty lyrics and satirical social commentary.

"It's a kind of pulpit for me," Paul told The Associated Press in a phone interview this week.

The 64-year-old priest made his debut this year at Spicemas, Grenada's biggest soca and calypso carnival. Like many annual carnivals across the Caribbean, it celebrates rebellion against enslavement. Paul sang his way into the finals and is scheduled to compete as "Father Paul" against 10 other singers this weekend, including "Killa B" and "Sour Serpent."

Paul joined the seminary 40 years ago and has been a priest for 32 years: "I was always concerned about the plight of the masses, so I saw the church as a vehicle for societal change."

His first taste of calypso came in 1988, while he was still in the seminary in Trinidad and Tobago. The seminary held a calypso competition where Paul made his debut and placed second.

His priestly duties then dominated his life, but after he was suspended two years ago following a sermon criticizing Israel's actions in Gaza, Paul embraced calypso again. He has recorded two songs so far — "Oh Gaza" and "Ah Want Ah Radar."

"I can't quite say I miss the ritual," he said, referring to being a priest. "Although I loved the ritual ... there is a lot of limitation to it as well."

He said that while he loved interacting with his congregation, being a calypso singer allows him to reach a wider audience.

"When you're in a small world, you feel that's the whole world," Paul said. "As a much bigger world opens to you, you can't go back."

PHOTOS BY FLOYD ROBINSON/AP

Gerard Paul, back center, rehearses with the Royal Grenada Police Force Band on Thursday in St. George, Grenada. He is a suspended priest who has turned to calypso, an Afro-Caribbean music genre known for its witty lyrics and satirical social commentary.

Paul was suspended in 2024, accused by a bishop of "persistent" attacks on the Catholic Church and its leadership. Paul said that being a calypso singer allows him to reach a wider audience.

Singing as a form of social criticism

Paul is known for his song "Ah Want Ah Radar," a riff on the U.S. government's real-life request to install a radar at Grenada's international airport last year as the U.S. military struck suspected drug-trafficking boats in the Caribbean.

Paul sings about Grenada's government dragging its feet on a decision, with the U.S. later installing a radar in neighboring Tobago.

In the song, Paul asks U.S. President Donald Trump for a radar of his own, which he said he would use to expose sexual abuse within the church.

"I'm begging the U.S., please," Paul sings.

"We all know the Catholic faith say that priests must be celibate, but they love what they say they hate. And it's just a cover-up from the level of the top," he sings as part of explicit lyrics that reference clergy having sex with boys.

Sermon leads to suspension

Paul, who angered the church in recent years, was hit with an indefinite suspension in April 2024.

In footage shot and later deleted by Good News Catholic Communications, an arm of the Catholic Diocese of St. George's in Grenada, Paul criticized Israel and accused it of committing genocide in Gaza — which Israel vehemently denies — during a March 2024 sermon in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in St. George's.

Paul called on the pope, bishops and priests to speak up during his sermon, which was published on social media by The Bubb Report, a local weekly investigative journalism program.

"We cannot rightly ever preach the gospel if we do not stand for justice," he said as some in the congregation applauded. He added: "When you stand in silence, when you sit in silence, you are part of the injustice."

Then-Bishop Clyde Harvey criticized Paul's sermon, calling it a "diatribe" and said he did not give the priest permission to say what he did.

"We can be proud to belong to a church which fails sometimes, but ... is always standing up wherever it can for justice," Harvey said.

On April 4, 2024, Paul was suspended indefinitely. In a statement, Harvey accused Paul of "persistent" attacks on the church and its leadership, saying his statements "have confused, harmed and scandalized many faith-filled persons. They have brought his fellow clergy into disrepute."

Harvey wrote: "When Fr Paul said, 'I have no regrets and I will do it again,' he put himself beyond review and fraternal correction. No institution can survive when such attitudes and actions are adopted."

On April 8, 2024, Harvey said in a video posted on social media that Paul was not suspended for his comments on Gaza, noting that such sentiments have echoed within and outside the Catholic Church. Rather, he was suspended for "his continuing lack of respect for the church of which he is a priest" and failure to "correct his errors," Harvey said.

He added: "Father Paul has expressed his views in ways that seem to mock authority."

Harvey stressed that the suspension is not a dismissal from priesthood.

Yet Paul remains suspended two years later.

The priest reached the upcoming finals by singing songs including, "Oh Gaza," a biting commentary about the Israeli military offensive in Gaza that has killed more than 73,000 people, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, with Paul describing deaths "while Zion drums beat and missiles pound."

"This is a time to make a voice for them," he sings. "Cannot just pretend everything is fine, Gaza on me mind ... When the Church would not take a stance, I go preach, I go preach."

The cost of the Iran war is mounting as lawmaker work on a way to pay for it

IRAN FROM **A1**

budget.

The CSIS estimate draws from six categories of spending: deployment, munitions, higher operational tempo, equipment losses, base damage and increased fuel prices.

Munitions are the key cost driver — at more than $26.1 billion, he estimates.

The United States has depleted much of its advanced missile-defense interceptor inventory — using more high-end munitions to defend Israel than Israeli forces used themselves against Iran, Washington Post reporting found. At the same time, Iran is using much cheaper munitions, causing an asymmetry in costs.

Last week, Trump expressed anger to Hegseth over the matter, demanding answers as to why he felt misled on munitions shortages, two people familiar with the exchanged told The Post.

U.S. officials in May told The Post the U.S. launched more than more than 200 Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, interceptors to defend Israel — roughly half of the Pentagon's total inventory. A THAAD interceptor costs about $15 million.

Those interceptors have to be replenished at higher costs now, analysts said.

Tomahawks missiles, U.S. long-range cruise missiles, cost more than $2 million each but are replaced for as much as double, said Linda J. Bilmes, a professor of public policy at the Harvard Kennedy School. Fuel in the inventory, too, she said is at a lower cost than the fuel replacement costs now.

The earlier supplemental ask of roughly $67 billion is "probably a reasonable estimate of extremely short-term costs — using inaccurate accounting," Bilmes said. The $67 billion may cover only "some of the very tip of the iceberg costs of this up-front, short-term personnel, munitions, fuel," she said.

The first few days of war, after the United States and Israel began a joint attack on Iran in February, were especially expensive. The Pentagon burned through $5.6 billion worth of munitions in the first two days of war with Iran, U.S. officials told The Post. In four weeks of war, the U.S. fired more than 850 Tomahawk cruise missiles — of which only a few hundred are manufactured annually.

Costs continue to rise amid ongoing operations in region even as the level of strikes dropped after Trump's interim truce agreement in June.

Medium and long-term costs are often excluded from Pentagon estimates.

U.S. military base damage has been costly, and the Pentagon has said it has not yet factored those repairs into its cost estimates. A Washington Post visual analysis of satellite imagery found that the amount of destruction to U.S. military sites is far larger than had been publicly acknowledged by the U.S. government. Iranian airstrikes had damaged or destroyed at least more than 228 structures or pieces of equipment at U.S. military sites across the Middle East by May.

The American Enterprise Institute, a right-leaning Washington think tank, estimated that damage to U.S. military bases in the region, including Qatar and the UAE, could cost $5 billion — in rebuilding, repairs and indirect costs such as design and engineering.

The Congressional Research Service in May said that at least 42 aircraft have been reportedly lost or damaged, raising potential budgetary issues.

AEI's Elaine McCusker's estimate puts the cost of Operation Epic Fury at $38.6 billion, as of June.

McCusker, a senior fellow at AEI and a former top Pentagon official, said it is important to assess the war's price against the value of what Americans are getting in return. She put the cost for each individual American at roughly $115 so far — the estimated $39 billion cost of the military operation divided by the size of the U.S. population.

The Kennedy School's Bilmes said that wars also have "long-tail cost," including long-term veterans benefits and surges to the Pentagon budget, which already increases every year. "And it's going to go up by a bigger amount than it would have in the absence of this war," she said.

This year's defense budget is about $1 trillion; for next year, the Trump administration has requested $1.5 trillion, a number that has raised concerns on Capitol Hill over adding to the $39 trillion national debt.

Short- and medium-term costs will be financed through borrowing, at rates much higher than they were in the 2000s, she said.

JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES

Increases in energy costs have been among the ways the Iran war, which is approaching its sixth month, has affected consumers.

"I've said since the beginning that this war is going to cost something like a trillion dollars," Bilmes said, by the time all the munitions are replenished, facilities are reconstructed, allies are helped, veterans benefits are paid, and borrowed funds are repaid with interest.

"It's a very costly operation, and the American taxpayer is gonna be paying for this for years," she said.

Consumer costs

The war has second-order costs on top of direct costs to taxpayers, including consumer burdens due to increased prices amid wartime disruptions.

"The indirect cost of this war may well outpace the direct costs in the years to come," said Gabe Murphy, a policy analyst at nonpartisan budget watchdog Taxpayers for Common Sense.

Trump has called higher gas prices "peanuts" compared to the threat of Iran attaining a nuclear weapon.

Comparing the current war scenario to a counterfactual "no-war" scenario, Brown University's Climate Solutions Lab put the extra costs paid for gasoline and diesel by all Americans since the start of the war at more than $79.8 billion — or about $609 per U.S. household. Its ticker continues to rise.

Mark Zandi, chief economist of Moody's Analytics, said the typical household will pay $1,000 because of the war — about a third of which is related to the cost of gasoline. His estimate also encompasses the cost of diesel, which affects anything put on a truck including groceries, jet fuel and higher interest rates. There's another $250 in taxes for direct military spending, he said.

He didn't include any confidence effects, he said, adding that consumer sentiment, including small business sentiment, has been "hit hard." The $1,000 cost is "on the low side of what we've actually paid," he added.

There are tax cuts that have offset some of the war costs — but "still the benefit of the tax cut is now in the rear view" as war costs accumulate, Zandi said.

There is also the larger, global macroeconomic consequences of the war, including the closure of the vital Strait of Hormuz — a number so large and complex to derive that analysts say it would be difficult to calculate with current data..

Noah Robertson, Riley Beggin and Jarrell Dillard contributed to this report.

SPORTS

Stefon Diggs, officially a Commander, is ready to 'put on for my city.' **B7**

METRO

Charge against former Olympian in Reflecting Pool case is dismissed. **B13**

The Washington Post
Style

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 2026

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PHOTOS BY MARKUS SCHREIBER/AP

People line up at the Burchardi Church in Halberstadt, Germany, on Wednesday to listen to a rare chord change in the world's slowest concert, which began in 2001 and is set to conclude in 2640 (not a typo).

SHEEP IN THE BOX
★★★☆

Kore-eda's latest is a fascinating journey

BY MOIRA MACDONALD
Seattle Times

The quietness of Japanese filmmaker Hirokazu Kore-eda's movies is a bit misleading; he's the kind of artist who can create emotional earthquakes from a mere glance.

His films, all of them beautifully subtle, heartbreaking yet often gently uplifting stories about children and families, include "Nobody Knows," "Our Little Sister," "Shoplifters," "Like Father Like Son" and the recent Netflix series "Asura."

"Sheep in the Box," his latest, has all the usual Kore-eda hallmarks, plus a touch of science fiction (and nothing whatsoever about sheep; the title's a reference to a passage in "The Little Prince").

It's perhaps not his finest outing — the story seems to lose its way a bit in the final act — but even second-rate Kore-eda is still a fascinating journey.

"Sheep in the Box" is the story of a grieving couple, Otone (Haruka Ayase) and Kensuke (Daigo Yamamoto), struggling to move forward after the loss of their 7-year-old only child, Kakeru. One day, soft-voiced Otone learns of a company called REbirth, which will supply bereaved families with a humanoid engineered to exactly resemble their lost loved one.

Despite her husband's reluctance — "They're hyenas cashing in on misfortune!" Kensuke says of the business — Otone would do anything to see her son again, and soon a sweet-faced, shiny-haired little boy robot (Rimu Kuwaki)

SEE **'SHEEP IN THE BOX'** ON **B2**

Slow-moving concert is anything but one-note

In Germany, an organ will play one composition for hundreds of years

BY STEFANIE DAZIO AND DAVID KEYTON
Associated Press

A small organ in eastern Germany is the headliner of the world's slowest concert. It has been playing the same piece of music by composer John Cage at a glacial pace for nearly 25 years.

A rare chord change on Wednesday — from seven notes to eight — represented the completion of about 4 percent of the 639-year endeavor of the John Cage Organ Project Halberstadt.

It was a historic moment inside the medieval Burchardi Church in Halberstadt, Germany, that reflected the past, present and future of the project, as well as those who are following its — albeit very slow — progression.

"As fast as our world is developing, I think it's a wonderful place to be and to come to yourself and just to be touched by this 'being there,'" said Anneli Borgmann, chairwoman of the John Cage Organ Project Halberstadt's board of trustees.

While the project commenced in 2000, the performance began Sept. 5, 2001 — Cage's 89th birthday — with a silent pause that lasted until Feb. 5, 2003, when the first chords could actually be heard.

The composition — called "ORGAN²/ASLSP (As SLow aS Possible)" — is scheduled to finish on Sept. 4, 2640.

An electric-powered blower system sends wind into the organ to create a continuous sound. A chord change, done manually, means that the sound of the organ pipes changes either because new

SEE **CAGE** ON **B2**

To pull off a 639-year concert, an electric-powered blower system sends wind into the organ to create a continuous sound.

Fecal Matter (the fashion house) is everywhere

BY BEATRICE DUPUY
Associated Press

The brand name behind recent showstopping fashion moments isn't quite as delicate as their romantic and otherworldly looks. When asked what an ethereal Zendaya was wearing for the "Odyssey" premiere in New York, her stylist Law Roach responded: "Fecal Matter."

Zendaya's angelic strapless gown with feathered white wings was the work of Matières Fécales — yes, in English, Fecal Matter — the Paris-based, high-end fashion house founded in Montreal over a decade ago that's, seemingly suddenly, everywhere.

Why Matières Fécales is called . . . that

The design duo behind Matières Fécales, Steven Raj Bhaskaran and Hannah Rose Dalton, have aimed to subvert beauty with their own alien-like personal style, including dramatic white makeup, shaved heads and eyebrows, and skin boots made to look like realistic feet.

Bhaskaran and Dalton started the brand as students at Collège LaSalle Montréal, going from selling designs on the second-hand shopping platform Depop to showcasing collections at Paris Fashion Week. The designers have said the name reflects their view of the fashion industry, a perspective they initially summed up with a more vulgar word.

"There's no other word for it, but how can we say it in a glamorous way? So we're like, 'fecal matter' is the scientific word for it," Dalton recalled to Vogue last year, adding they

SEE **FASHION** ON **B3**

Slow concert allows visitors to ponder movement of time

CAGE FROM **B1**

sounds are added or existing sounds end.

More than 150 people squeezed inside the church Wednesday to witness what was the piece's 17th chord change, with dozens more watching a live stream outside.

For three minutes, the crowd listened to the "old" chord with its seven pipes. Then, an eighth pipe was slotted into the small organ, bringing with it a new sound that reverberated throughout the church. The spectators listened for another three minutes — some filming with cellphones, others taking it all in with their eyes closed and heads bowed — before breaking out into applause and cries of "Bravo!"

"It's a very subtle difference," said Jeffrey Lependorf, executive director of the John Cage Trust in New York. "There's a higher sound that's a little more prominent."

MARKUS SCHREIBER/AP

Anneli Borgmann adds a pipe to the organ playing a 639-year-long concert at a church in Halberstadt, Germany.

Cage's music inspires after his death

Cage, an American avant-garde composer, was born in Los Angeles in 1912 and died in New York in 1992. He was also a renowned music theorist, artist and philosopher whose only direction for this piece was to play it as slowly and as softly as possible. He initially composed it for the piano in 1985 and updated it for the organ in 1987. It was reimagined into the 639-year project after his death.

The interpretation of the composition in Halberstadt has resulted in the smallest unit being one month long. Other units — as well as silences — can last years.

The project has transformed the Burchardi Church, which was left largely in ruins before money was raised for a new roof and other fixes to make the piece a reality. The sound there envelopes visitors throughout the church and gives them new experiences to hear as they move through the empty space.

"I think it really is the organ playing the church and not the other way around," Lependorf said. "You move two inches in any direction and it sounds not subtly different — very different."

Generations of stewards ensure organ's future

The piece will last 639 years, from 2001 to 2640. The time frame was chosen to be a tribute to a historic organ in Halberstadt that dates back to 1361, or 639 years before the project was initiated in 2000, according to Borgmann.

The time frame allows the project's stewards and visitors to contemplate not only Cage's legacy but their own as guardians of an organ that will outlive them as each chord change depends upon a new generation of musicians, volunteers and craftspeople to keep the piece going.

Cage fan Michael Barnett, 55, from Glasgow, Scotland, said attending the chord change was a bucket list item.

"This is just one of those things, one of those unique things in the world of music," he said. "It comes up and you think 'I just want to do this thing once.'"

Barnett and other enthusiasts also debate what the world will look like by the end of the piece.

"You just wonder what will be left here in 600-odd years time," Barnett said. "Who will come to the last performance? Will the building still be here? Will the organ still work? What will the world be like?"

The organ, at least, is built to last.

Organ builder Johannes Hüfken said the pipes he's crafted for this will last at least another 500 years.

"This John Cage project is a good example of thinking ahead for the next generation — thinking outside the box, beyond the completely normal and traditional," he said.

The next chord change will take place on Oct. 5, 2027, when the overall sound will be reduced by releasing the E4 pipe.

Inheritable "final tickets" for the Sept. 4, 2640, finale are already being sold for 2,640 euros ($3,045).

Amanda Knox says her comedy show honors her slain former roommate

BY PAN PYLAS
Associated Press

LONDON — Amanda Knox, the American student convicted and later acquitted of the murder and sexual assault of her British roommate Meredith Kercher 19 years ago in Italy, is defending herself against accusations from Kercher's sister that her comedy show at the Edinburgh Fringe festival in Scotland trivializes violence against women.

Knox, now 39, said Thursday in a post on Instagram that her show "honors Meredith Kercher's memory and calls out the violence that was done to her and to me."

The show is called "Cartwheel," a reference to a story that claimed Knox did cartwheels in the police station after Kercher's death. The show was set to debut Friday evening and is expected to run for 11 nights at the annual mishmash of stand-up, theater and musical offerings in the Scottish capital.

The show is being marketed as a woman "approaching forty, juggling motherhood and finally getting around to being furious about the whole wrongful-imprisonment thing. Especially when half the world is telling her to get over it, while the other half still thinks she's guilty."

Knox was a 20-year-old student in Perugia, Italy, when Kercher was found stabbed to death on Nov. 2, 2007, in her bedroom in the apartment they shared with two Italian women.

The case made global headlines as suspicion quickly fell on Knox and her boyfriend of days, Raffaele Sollecito. She served nearly four years in prison during the investigation, initial murder trial and when she was freed by an appeals court in Perugia. Knox and Sollecito were acquitted by Italy's highest court in 2015.

Another man, Rudy Hermann Guede, from the Ivory Coast, was eventually convicted of murder after his DNA was found at the crime scene. He was freed in 2021, after serving most of his 16-year sentence.

Knox returned to the United States in 2011, after being freed by the appeals court in Perugia, and has since established herself as a global campaigner for the wrongly convicted. She has a podcast with her husband and last year published a memoir titled, "Free: My Search for Meaning."

Knox's post follows an interview that Kercher's sister, Stephanie Kercher, gave to the BBC during which she said the show "normalizes and trivializes violence against women."

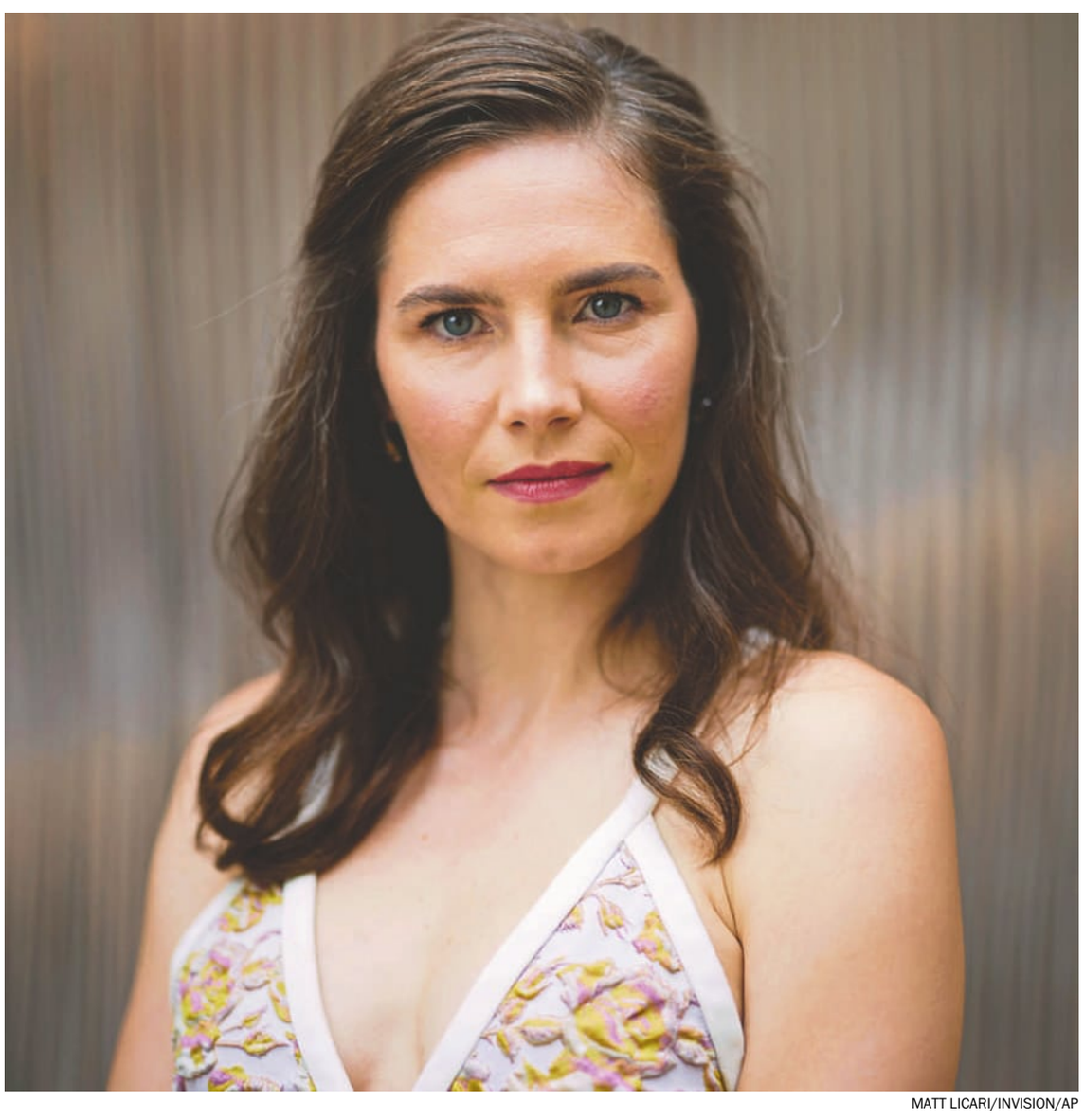
While insisting that Knox is "naturally free to continue with her life as she wishes," she said "the problem with this particular project is that it is comedy."

"It's not about whether people think she's guilty or innocent, if someone else was doing the show specifically against Meredith, I would still feel the same. It is obviously an added wound that it's coming from her at the same time, but I do feel very strongly that it should be something that's not given a platform," she said.

An online petition calling for the show to be canceled has been launched and so far has more than 4,400 signatories. It states that the show "mocks the horrific events surrounding Meredith's murder and aims to somehow turn this tragedy into entertainment."

Knox said "a petition to cancel a show no one has seen, on the grounds of false accusations intended to shame and vilify a wronged woman into silence, is not an argument against Cartwheel."

The Edinburgh Fringe, she added, "is the perfect place for a show like this."



MATT LICARI/INVISION/AP

Amanda Knox, who was convicted and later acquitted of the murder of her roommate Meredith Kercher in Italy, said her comedy show "calls out the violence that was done to [Kercher] and to me."

NEON/AP

In "Sheep in the Box," Haruka Ayase, left, and Daigo Yamamoto, right, portray grieving parents with a humanoid robot (Rimu Kuwaki) that resembles their late son.

'Sheep in the Box' is a meditation on grief, loss and parental love

'SHEEP IN THE BOX' FROM **B1**

has arrived in their home, simultaneously exactly like Kakeru and not like him at all. He has everything their son once had, except a soul.

It's a plot that shares some DNA with Kazuo Ishiguro's 2021 novel "Klara and the Sun" (itself being adapted for a feature film, coming later this year), and it's rich emotional territory for Koreeda, who makes the film less a parable about technology but a meditation on grief and loss and parental love, on how the heart can will itself to see something that isn't there.

Otone looks at "Kakeru" as if he's nourishment she needs to devour, ignoring Kensuke's reluctance ("I'm not your papa. Call me Mister," he insists) and the scorn of her own mother, who calls him "that thing."

There's a long moment — actually more than one — where she simply stares at him, and you see through her gaze the boy that was once her world.

At one point, she reads to him from "The Little Prince," words that sum up the movie eloquently: "You can't see the things that really matter."

PG *At area theaters. Contains some language, smoking and a brief bloody image. 126 minutes.*

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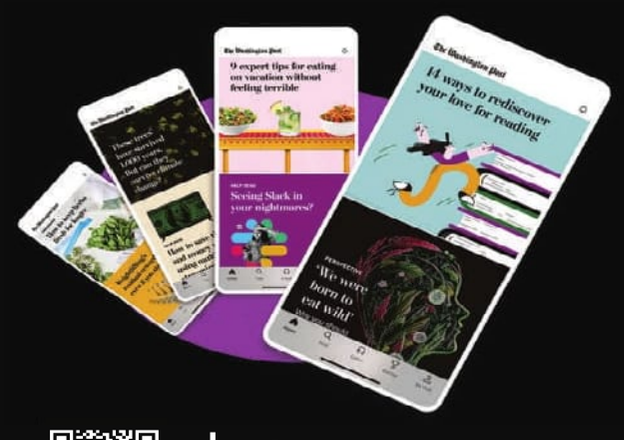
Share extra accounts.
Scan the code or visit
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S 3 x 5.96

Fashion house subverts standards, starting with its name

FASHION FROM **B1**

translated it into French, which "sounds way more glamorous." Bhaskaran told the "Fashion Neurosis" podcast in March that the name was also intended to "challenge the wasteful side of fashion."

A representative for Matières Fécales said the designers were not available for comment.

Despite the visceral name, tastemakers from Lady Gaga to Kylie Jenner are embracing their designs.

"There is this beautiful tension in their work between the finesse and the decaying, and the strong and the soft," celebrity stylist Brad Goreski said.

And after years of building a cult following, they were taken under the wings of Dover Street Market in 2024, after first meeting its president, Adrian Joffe, backstage at a Madonna show. The global retail and concept stores offer emerging brands development support, from production and distribution to sales.

Kristen Bateman, a longtime fashion and culture writer who has attended all three of the designers' Paris Fashion Week shows, said their rise is driven by the industry's desire to see something new.

"If you're looking at the high-fashion brands like Chanel and Dior, it all sort of starts to blend together," she said. "And this feels like it's in its own category. . . . You can't replicate it."

From cult status to Paris Fashion Week

Milan Tanedjikov, a Collège LaSalle Montréal design teacher, had a front-row seat to Dalton and Bhaskaran's rise and says they have finally found the balance between their art and fashion.

"They have created this, like, very interesting organism together," he said.

The designers were invited onto the official calendar for Paris Fashion Week last year, debuting "The Other," a collection they described as an ode to being fearless with identity. It featured a collaboration pairing their striking curved-heel design with Christian Louboutin's signature red sole.

EVAN AGOSTINI/AP

Zendaya wears an ethereal look by Matières Fécales — in English, Fecal Matter —at last month's New York premiere of "The Odyssey."

JORDAN STRAUSS/AP

Lady Gaga wears a Fecal Matter design to the Grammys earlier this year. The fashion house has designed Coachella looks for her.

"At their very core, what drives them is absolute freedom of expression, and they want to push the boundaries of what is human," Tanedjikov said.

In March, during Paris Fashion Week, the duo unveiled "The One Percent," with models theatrically strutting with red paint on white opera gloves and wearing eye masks made of dollar bills. The collection showcased how "power affects us all," they wrote on Instagram.

SCOTT A GARFITT/INVISION/AP

Demi Moore wears a frayed Barbie-pink ball gown from the fashion house at Cannes in May, a break from her usual structured looks.

"What they were able to build in such a small amount of time is really insane in terms of world building and creating their world," Augustin Maunier, Dover Street Market's director of brand development, said. "There's real storytelling behind it."

The show's theme was a stark contrast to the billionaires who had been sitting front row at other fashion week shows. At this year's Met Gala, where Jeff Bezos was an honorary chair, actor Sarah Paulson wore a voluminous, gray, distressed ball gown from the collection, paired with the eye-covering money mask. (Bezos owns The Washington Post.)

Goreski pulled from "The One Percent" for Demi Moore's wardrobe as a Cannes Film Festival jury member, telling the AP he wanted something new for Moore. Moore's frayed, full-volume, Barbie-pink ball gown with a distressed bow was a break from her usual structured looks. In 20 years of dressing Moore, Goreski said she hardly ever chooses a full-skirt "cupcake" shape, but that she fell for the designers' artistic vision and storytelling.

"They're designing clothes for themselves," he said. "That's authentically them, but they're bringing it to like a whole other audience."

Find their clothes on Lady Gaga and a Dunkin' ad

Early supporters of the brand fittingly included boundary-breaking performers Madonna and Lady Gaga. Madonna even invited them to DJ on her tour in 2023 and they've designed custom looks for Gaga's live performances, including Coachella. At this year's Grammys, Gaga wore a high-neck, feathered, black gown from the designers, a dark angel to Zendaya's heavenly "Odyssey" look.

Now, though, their bold designs are going beyond red carpets. In a television ad for Dunkin', Kylie Jenner wore a blush-pink, satin, structured blazer with over-the-top shoulder pads, a designer choice that generated some amusement online from those previously unfamiliar with the brand's name.

The designers created a distressed Victorian-style dress for model Gabbriette Bechtel's wedding to musician Matty Healy, a first for the brand.

With their next Paris Fashion Week show set for September, fashion connoisseurs are eagerly waiting to see what's next.

"We're rooting for them because they're younger designers who have something to say," fashion commentator Hanan Besovic, who posts online as @IDeserveCouture, said.

Here's the thing about other people's bling: Let's not make broad assumptions

Carolyn Hax

Adapted from an online discussion.

Dear Carolyn: Women usually want a nice expensive ring when someone proposes to them. I have noticed that after being married for a long time, though, some only wear wedding bands. Do you have any idea why?

— Anonymous

Anonymous: Because big rings (and little rings, especially any rings with stones) catch on things. A lot of times I don't even wear a band. It catches on things, too.

Re: Rings: "Women usually want a nice expensive ring"? Puke. Are you seriously going to let this pass uncontested???

— Sickened

Sickened: No. Let's not. These fine commenters will do the work (thanks):

• Hoo boy. Maybe broaden your circle and your thinking a bit. Sure, some women want a big ring. But some *men* want to give a big ring for their own egos, and some women don't give a hoot about a ring and just want to plan a future with their beloved.

• I'm sure there are many women who want a nice expensive engagement ring. But among my cohort, I don't know a single such woman. When they got engaged, they wanted a ring that felt meaningful, whether it was their fiancé's mother's ring, or a non-diamond ring from an antique store, or a diamond ring they chose together that suited their style and budget. There is no "women usually want." There is only what individual women want.

• Hmm, if you're wondering why you bought an expensive ring that isn't getting worn, then ask your person. If it's anyone else, not your business.

I almost never wear my INexpensive engagement ring, which I helped shop for, because I'm not a huge jewelry person, it's awkward with my wedding band, and sometimes I don't feel like wearing my band, either.

You made a number of assumptions — that folks want expensive rings AND asked for them, and that they even have an engagement ring. Again, check your assumptions, and ask the only one who matters here — your person.

Dear Carolyn: Are many teenagers sullen, messy and completely annoyed by everything the parent says? Just feeling like I am the only parent right now.

— Need a Reality Check

Need a Reality Check: Did you miss every teen movie and book ever? And your own life from 12-17ish?

Sorry, I'm still part adolescent myself.

That age is a roiling mess of new growth and confidence and self-doubt and feelings and huge (fascinating) new thoughts, and kids take it out hardest on the ones they trust most to love them through anything. Meaning, you.

Plus you annoy them so much you make their cells vibrate with annoyance when you're within two rooms of them. It's not personal, it's developmental. They need to get away from you to understand themselves without you.

It's not only not just you, a lone cast-off parent, feeling this; pretty much every parent or guardian of a teen does at some point. Every adolescent's most trusted person.

There are ways to ease up on yourself, though, and even enjoy this time:

Be present but not up in their business unless you have to. (Define "have to"? Too early is too much and too late is too little. You know — lots of deep breathing.)

Be open to talking — no, listening — whenever their need to talk strikes them, even if it's at midnight.

Be great at not taking their surliness personally. The better you get at this, the better you become at the availability part. And the listening part, and the understanding part. Getting defensive tends to escalate things needlessly because it means *you just don't understand* and *make it all about you,* which in this case might be right on both counts. Huh.

Last thing: "Don't take it personally" is not the same thing as being a doormat. The difference tends to manifest in choice of priorities and wisdom at picking battles. Think: survival, yes; love, yes; self-respect, yes; flipping out over hair color, no. Good luck!

Write to Carolyn Hax at tellme@washpost.com. Get her newsletter delivered to your inbox each morning at wapo.st/gethax.

Join the discussion live at noon Fridays at washingtonpost.com/live-chats.

ILLUSTRATION BY NICK GALIFIANAKIS/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

How to handle a girlfriend who is insensitive about a sensitive body part

Asking Eric

R. ERIC THOMAS

Dear Eric: I am a 64-year-old male with nipples that seem to stand at attention practically all the time. While my girlfriend doesn't seem to have a problem with it, per se, she makes light of it quite often, and I am starting to feel a tad on the freakish side.

"How are Pikes Peak and Mt. McKinley today?" is one example of the daily jibes. I have never thought much of it but am now starting to wonder about the causes and any possible solutions. I am too embarrassed to ask my doctor about it.

Can you please advise: 1) any suggestions for tamping down Peak and McKinley. 2) How best to respond to my joke-a-minute girlfriend when she starts up with the nipple jokes. I don't want to be oversensitive.

— Twin Peaks

Peaks: You might look into the tape that runners often use to prevent chafing. This is different from regular tape in that the adhesive is formulated to be kinder to sensitive skin. Tape is a temporary solution, of course, but might relieve some of the momentary discomfort you feel so that you can focus on other parts of the situation that are bothering you.

It's worth your time to talk to a medical professional that you trust about this. Your doctor has surely seen and heard everything. This isn't something about which you should feel ashamed — it's something that's just happening on your body. You're not doing anything to make it happen and even if you were, a good doctor isn't going to judge you or chastise you. If you don't feel you can bring it up to your doctor, consider talking with someone you don't know at urgent care, for instance. But also consider changing doctors to someone you trust.

As to your girlfriend: sometimes comments that start out as innocent, even well-received, jokes can chafe as much as, well, a shirt on a long-distance runner. And just like the runner would do, you can and should make adjustments to get comfortable.

In this case, that means telling your girlfriend, "I know you don't mean anything by it, but would you stop making light of my nipples?" You don't need to explain yourself further if you don't want to. Hopefully, she'll hear what you're asking and make the change. It's not overly sensitive; it's good communication.

Dear Eric: I've been volunteering as a tour guide at a small historical site for about two years. The site is one of a handful managed by a city department. While most of us volunteers are seniors, the staff is much younger. But they've always been friendly and welcoming. I tend to get good feedback on my tours and enjoy it, but museum hours are limited.

Recently, a much larger site, managed by a state organization, advertised for volunteers.

However, I'm finding the atmosphere to be not all that friendly. First off, two of the guides I shadowed were a little cool, even though it only amounted to an extra person on their tours.

Since then, I've worked with a couple of people whom I knew from the other site where I volunteer, who are friendly, but shift supervisors, who work the counter, often converse with older volunteers they know and ignore me.

I should emphasize that I'm not a sensitive person looking for slights. My attitude, when adults behave like middle-schoolers, is to take the high road and ignore it. My enjoyment comes in giving tours. That said, the site is desperate for volunteers. It's not unusual for managerial staff to have to fill open shifts. I've also been told that many people train but never come back. I'm toying with whether I should make managerial staff aware of what I've noticed, since it might be the key to their problem. Or should I just mind my business, run my tours and go home?

— Disillusioned Volunteer

Volunteer: It may be helpful to split the difference here. If you enjoy giving the tours at the state-run site, consider focusing on that for a bit and stay out of office politics. By showing up consistently, you may find that the formerly frosty staff will start to thaw and that could be your opportunity to see if they're open to some feedback.

There's no reason for anyone to give you the cold shoulder, especially as a volunteer, but it is possible that since they're used to people training and not coming back, they're making unfair assumptions about you and whether you'll stay. This behavior becomes something of a self-fulfilling prophecy — if they're rude to new people because they don't expect new people to stay, well, of course the new people won't stay.

But if you enjoy your main task, don't let their behavior rob you of that opportunity.

Send questions to R. Eric Thomas at *eric@askingeric.com* or P.O. Box 22474, Philadelphia, PA 19110. Follow him on Instagram and sign up for his weekly newsletter at *rericthomas.com.*

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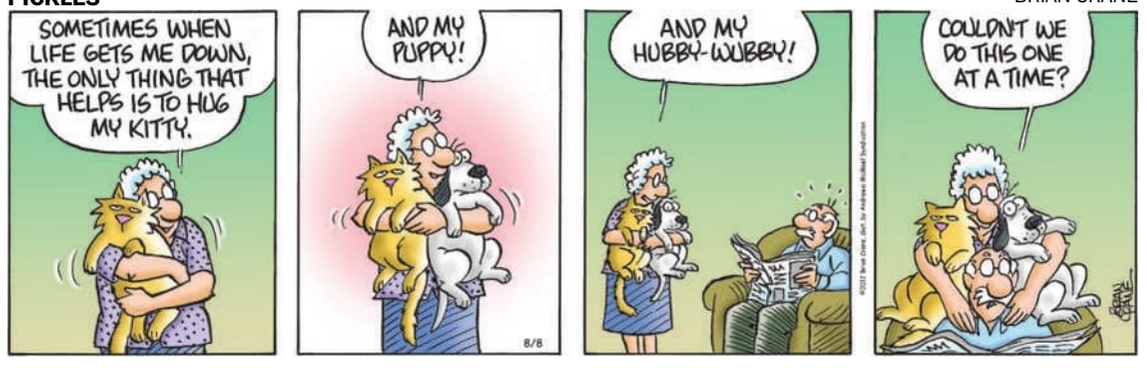
CLASSIC DOONESBURY GARRY TRUDEAU

YOU GOT A TEXT MESSAGE ON YOUR NEW PHONE, DAD.
TEXT MESSAGE? WHAT'S THAT?
KIND OF LIKE A PHONE E-MAIL. "HEY, BRO, WORD IS U R HOME. RAY."
INCREDIBLE. A MESSAGE FROM IRAQ?
REAL-TIME COMMUNI-CATION. ONLY WITHOUT THE HASSLE OF A CALL.
"GTG. MASSIVE CAR BOMB EXPLOSION."
SEE? IT REALLY PUTS YOU ON THE SCENE.

PICKLES BRIAN CRANE


SOMETIMES WHEN LIFE GETS ME DOWN, THE ONLY THING THAT HELPS IS TO HUG MY KITTY.
AND MY PUPPY!
AND MY HUBBY-WUBBY!
COULDN'T WE DO THIS ONE AT A TIME?

RED AND ROVER BRIAN BASSET

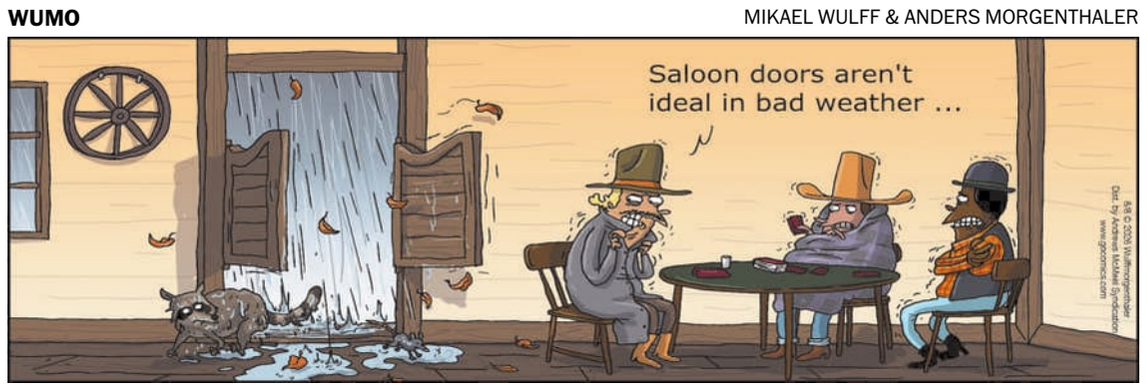
(SIGH) HUMBLED YET AGAIN, MOBY TADPOLE IS WITHOUT A DOUBT THE UNDISPUTED MASTER OF CAMOUFLAGE.
THAT SAID, LET'S NOT FORGET JUST HOW MUCH FUN WE HAD TODAY.
THREE, MAYBE EVEN FOUR OR FIVE TONS OF FUN!
I BELIEVE THE EXPRESSION IS SIMPLY "A TON OF FUN."
I WAS OBVIOUSLY REFERRING TO HOW MUCH THE POND WEIGHS.

AGNES TONY COCHRAN

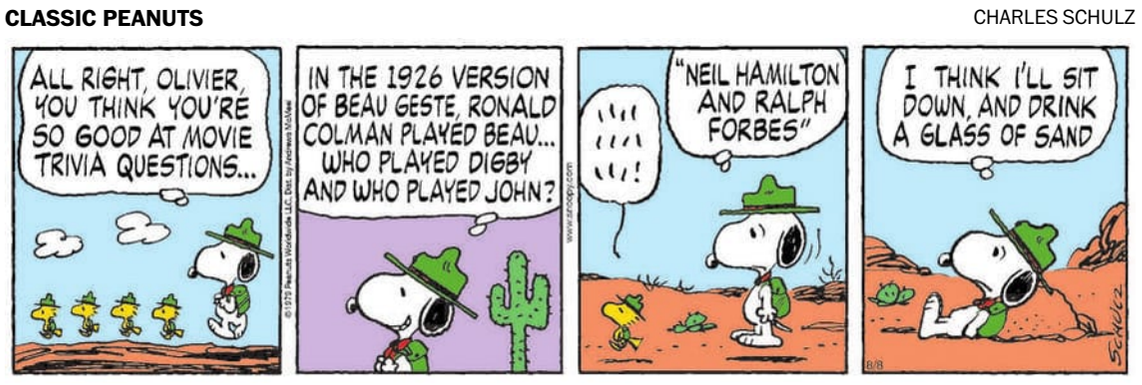
I WANT TO GIVE MORE OF MYSELF.
NO, THANKS.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO YOU SPECIFICALLY. I MEANT TO THE WORLD.
I'M PRETTY SURE THEY'LL TURN YOU DOWN AS WELL...YOU'RE DIFFICULT TO TAKE.
WELL... THIS WILL FREE UP A LOT OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELFISH PURSUITS.
COME SEE ME WHEN THOSE HIT SERIOUS PAY DIRT.

FRANK AND ERNEST TOM THAVES

WUMO MIKAEL WULFF & ANDERS MORGENTHALER



CLASSIC PEANUTS CHARLES SCHULZ


ALL RIGHT, OLIVIER, YOU THINK YOU'RE SO GOOD AT MOVIE TRIVIA QUESTIONS...
IN THE 1926 VERSION OF BEAU GESTE, RONALD COLMAN PLAYED BEAU... WHO PLAYED DIGBY AND WHO PLAYED JOHN?
"NEIL HAMILTON AND RALPH FORBES"
I THINK I'LL SIT DOWN, AND DRINK A GLASS OF SAND

CRABGRASS TAUHID BONDIA

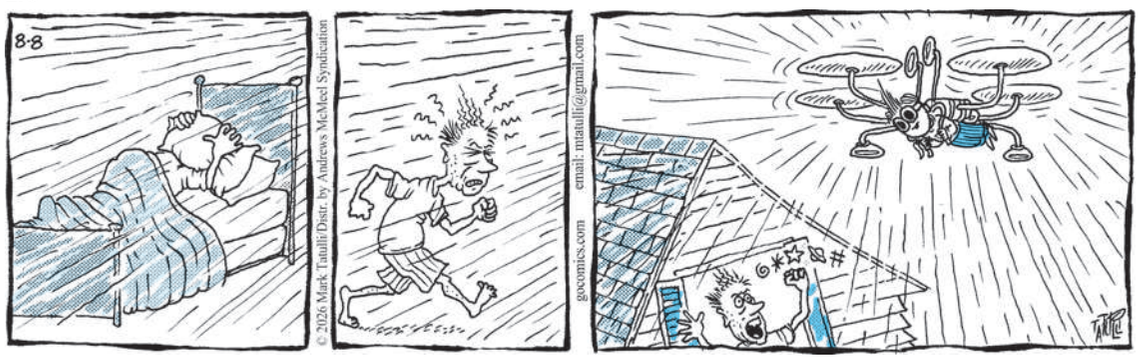
YOU WANNA PLAY A GAME? FINE. I'LL PLAY ONE GAME OF WHAC-A-MOLE.
FOR ALL THE MARBLES.
AND WHAT MARBLES ARE THOSE, EXACTLY?
WHOEVER LOSES HAS TO LEAVE MY MOM ALONE FOREVER.
YOU MIGHT WANNA THINK THAT THROUGH, CHAMP.
WHAT IF YOU LOSE?
WELL... HUNH.
I SAY LET IT PLAY OUT.

RHYMES WITH ORANGE HILARY PRICE

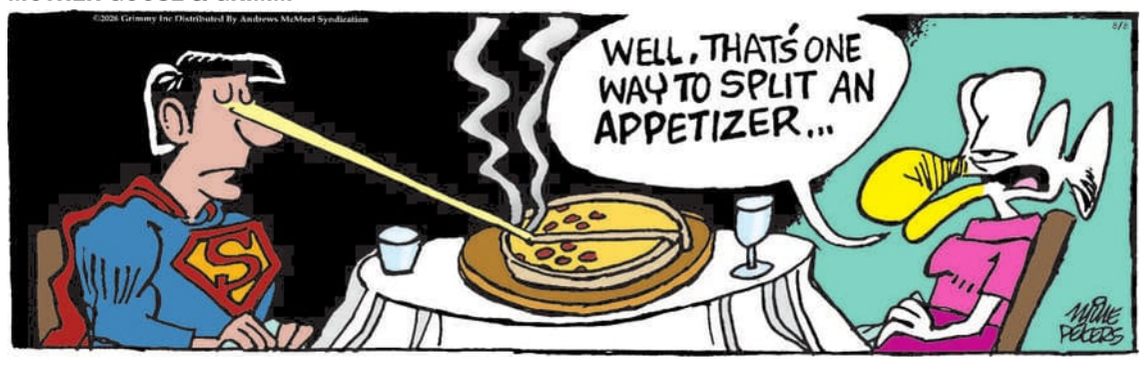
MARK TRAIL JULES RIVERA

AS MARK AND CHERRY DISCUSS SPOOKY CAVE VIDEOS, CRICKET BRO AND FRIENDS HAVE A CAVE PLAN OF THEIR OWN.
GUESS WHAT WE'RE DOING, FELLOW WEB GOONS! WE ARE GOING CAVING IN THE PELIGROSO CAVE!
YOU READY, CRYPTO BRO?
HECK YEAH!
I DON'T GET PAID ENOUGH FOR THIS FOOLISHNESS.
SORRY, DIANA.

LIO MARK TATULLI

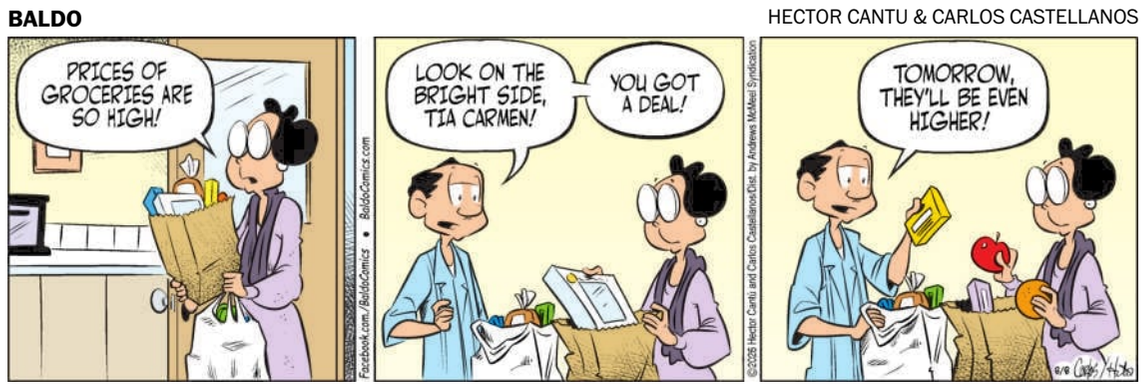


MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM MIKE PETERS

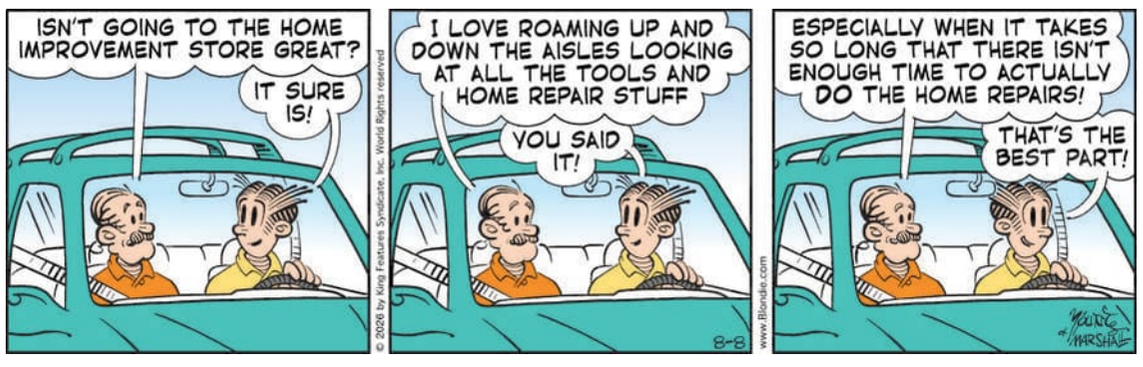


HAGAR THE HORRIBLE CHRIS BROWNE

BALDO HECTOR CANTU & CARLOS CASTELLANOS



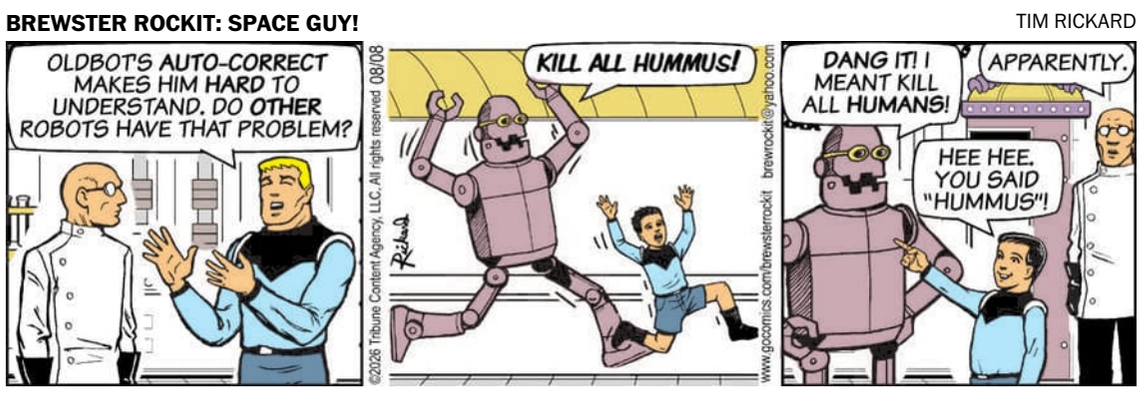
BLONDIE DEAN YOUNG & JOHN MARSHALL


ISN'T GOING TO THE HOME IMPROVEMENT STORE GREAT?
IT SURE IS!
I LOVE ROAMING UP AND DOWN THE AISLES LOOKING AT ALL THE TOOLS AND HOME REPAIR STUFF
YOU SAID IT!
ESPECIALLY WHEN IT TAKES SO LONG THAT THERE ISN'T ENOUGH TIME TO ACTUALLY DO THE HOME REPAIRS!
THAT'S THE BEST PART!

SALLY FORTH FRANCESCO MARCIULIANO & JIM KEEFE

BREE! AFTER EVERYTHING I SAID YOU STILL BUILT AN AMUSEMENT PARK IN OUR BACKYARD?!?
YOU CAN'T ARGUE WITH THE RESULTS!
OF COURSE I CAN! I TOLD YOU...YOU CAN'T JUST...WHO ON EARTH WOULD... HOW COULD YOU GO AND...
SIGH...CAN I AT LEAST ENTER MY OWN BACKYARD FOR FREE?
OOOOO...NO, BUT I CAN GIVE YOU A SENIOR DISCOUNT. YOU OVER 65?

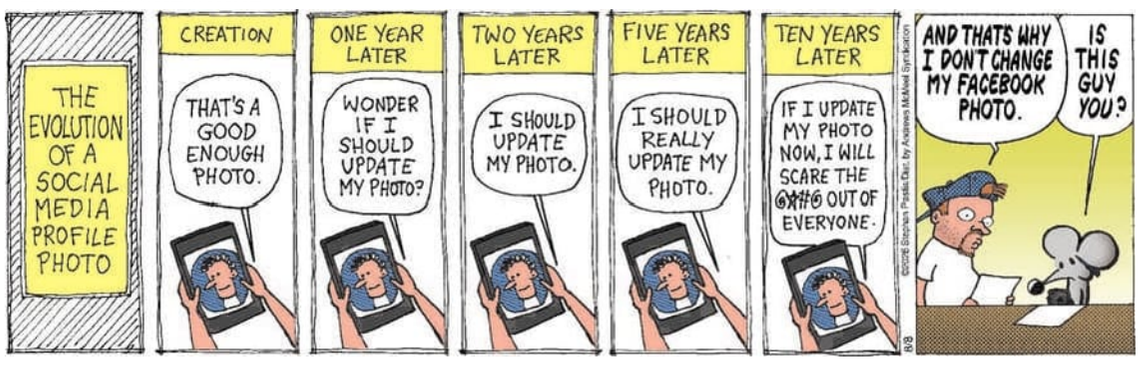
BREWSTER ROCKIT: SPACE GUY! TIM RICKARD


OLDBOT'S AUTO-CORRECT MAKES HIM HARD TO UNDERSTAND. DO OTHER ROBOTS HAVE THAT PROBLEM?
KILL ALL HUMMUS!
DANG IT! I MEANT KILL ALL HUMANS!
APPARENTLY.
HEE HEE. YOU SAID "HUMMUS"!

SHERMAN'S LAGOON JIM TOOMEY

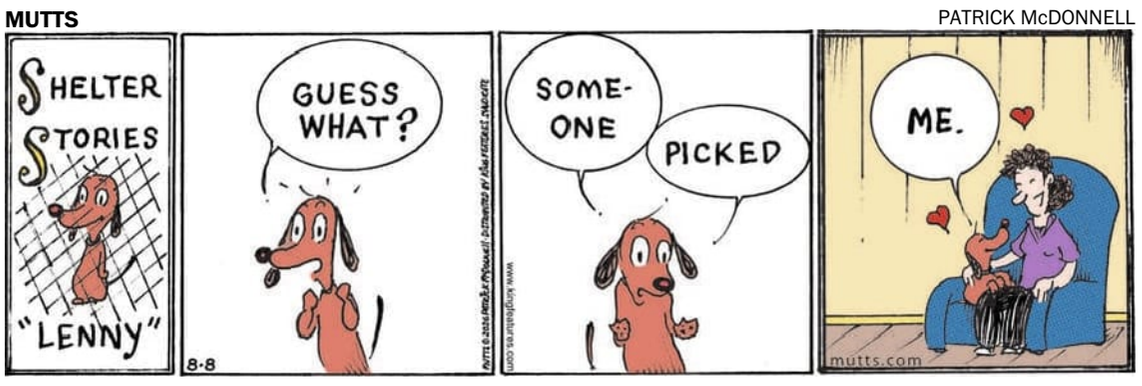
TODAY WAS MY LAST DAY AS OUR SON'S SOCCER COACH.
YEAH?
THEY HIRED A FULL-TIME COACH.
NO MORE TELLING THE BOYS HOW TO PLAY...
SCREAMING AT THE REF...
CALLING THE SHOTS...
BACK TO JUST BEING A PARENT ON THE SIDELINES.
WHERE YOU'LL DO ALL THAT ANYWAY.

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE STEPHAN PASTIS


THE EVOLUTION OF A SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILE PHOTO
CREATION
THAT'S A GOOD ENOUGH PHOTO.
ONE YEAR LATER
WONDER IF I SHOULD UPDATE MY PHOTO?
TWO YEARS LATER
I SHOULD UPDATE MY PHOTO.
FIVE YEARS LATER
I SHOULD REALLY UPDATE MY PHOTO.
TEN YEARS LATER
IF I UPDATE MY PHOTO NOW, I WILL SCARE THE OUT OF EVERYONE.
AND THAT'S WHY I DON'T CHANGE MY FACEBOOK PHOTO.
IS THIS GUY YOU?

CURTIS RAY BILLINGSLEY

MUTTS PATRICK McDONNELL



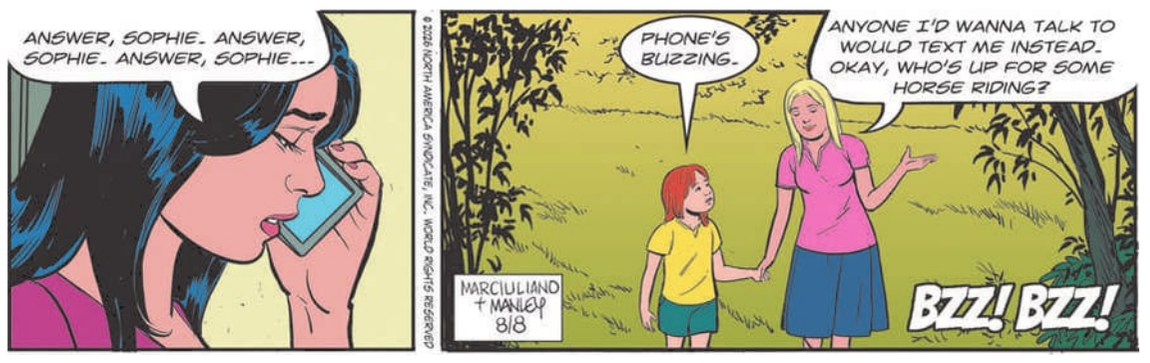
ZITS JERRY SCOTT & JIM BORGMAN

THAT'S IT! I'VE HAD IT, JEREMY!
SOMETIMES YOU'RE SO MUCH FUN TO BE AROUND, AND OTHER TIMES I DON'T WANT TO BE IN THE SAME ROOM WITH YOU!
MY MOM CALLED ME A SPORADIC CHARISMATIC.
CRITICAL, YET POETIC. I RESPECT THAT.

HEART OF THE CITY STEENZ

RAMEN WAS SO GOOD!!
GOT ENOUGH ROOM IN YOUR STOMACH FOR ICE CREAM AND SNACKS?
ALWAYS.
DATING LIZ WAS THE RIGHT MOVE, DAD.
HEART OF THE CITY © 2026 ANDREWS MCMEEL
@GOCOMICS.COM/HEARTOFTHECITY

JUDGE PARKER FRANCESCO MARCIULIANO & MIKE MANLEY

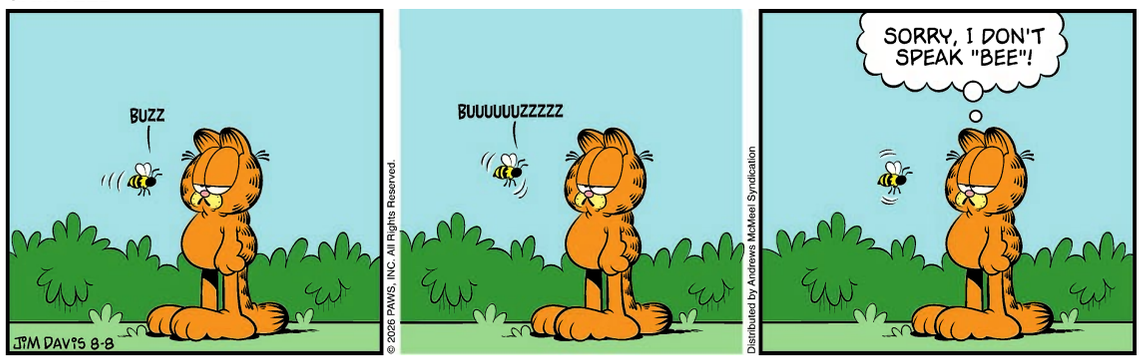

ANSWER, SOPHIE. ANSWER, SOPHIE. ANSWER, SOPHIE...
PHONE'S BUZZING.
ANYONE I'D WANNA TALK TO WOULD TEXT ME INSTEAD. OKAY, WHO'S UP FOR SOME HORSE RIDING?
BZZZ! BZZZ!
MARCIULIANO + MANLEY 8/8

FRAZZ JEF MALLETT

The discussion: Where would you go for
a weekend?
a week?
a month?
a year?
WAIT. I KNOW: NEW YORK!
GREAT CHOICE!
A WEEK OUGHT TO BE JUST ENOUGH TO EXPERIENCE...
ABOUT TWO PERCENT OF IT.
ONE PERCENT, IF YOU DO IT RIGHT.

SIX CHIX BANNERMAN, XUNISE, KONAR, LAWTON, PATRINOS & PIRO

GARFIELD JIM DAVIS



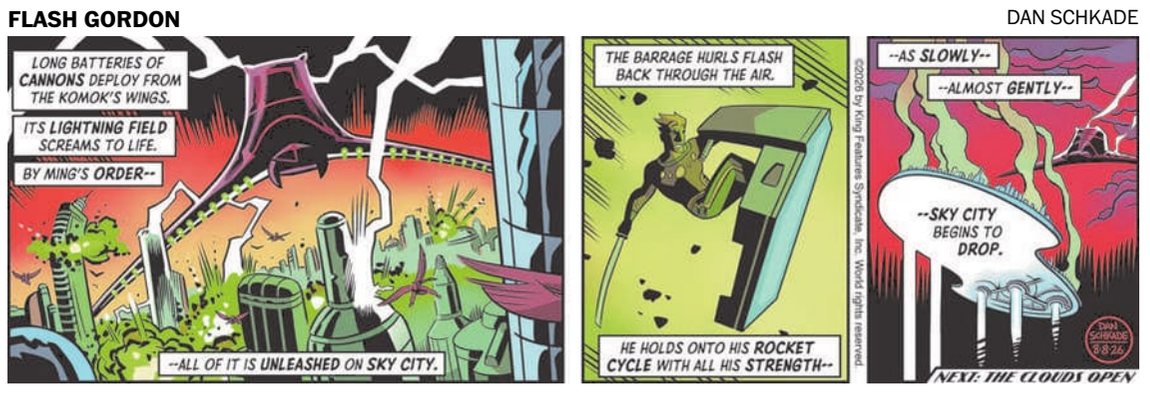
BARNEY AND CLYDE WEINGARTENS & CLARK

What are you putting on your cut?
Neosporin.
In my day, kids were tougher. We used merthiolate.
Hurt like the dickens. And stained your skin.
Wow.
And it had mercury in it. Like eating a fish from the Yangtze
Wow!
Didn't do me any harm! I'm stronger for it now, at 40.
You're 78, Grandpa
Oh. Right.

DUSTIN STEVE KELLEY & JEFF PARKER

I WISH I HAD A GOOD JOB, A TRENDY APARTMENT AND A NICE CAR.
YOU CAN HAVE ALL OF THAT STUFF, DUSTIN. YOU JUST NEED A BETTER WORK ETHIC.
I WISH I HAD A BETTER WORK ETHIC.
dustincomics.com

FLASH GORDON DAN SCHKADE


LONG BATTERIES OF CANNONS DEPLOY FROM THE KOMOK'S WINGS.
IT'S LIGHTNING FIELD SCREAMS TO LIFE.
BY MING'S ORDER--
--ALL OF IT IS UNLEASHED ON SKY CITY.
THE BARRAGE HURLS FLASH BACK THROUGH THE AIR.
HE HOLDS ONTO HIS ROCKET CYCLE WITH ALL HIS STRENGTH--
--AS SLOWLY--
--ALMOST GENTLY--
--SKY CITY BEGINS TO DROP.
NEXT: THE CLOUDS OPEN

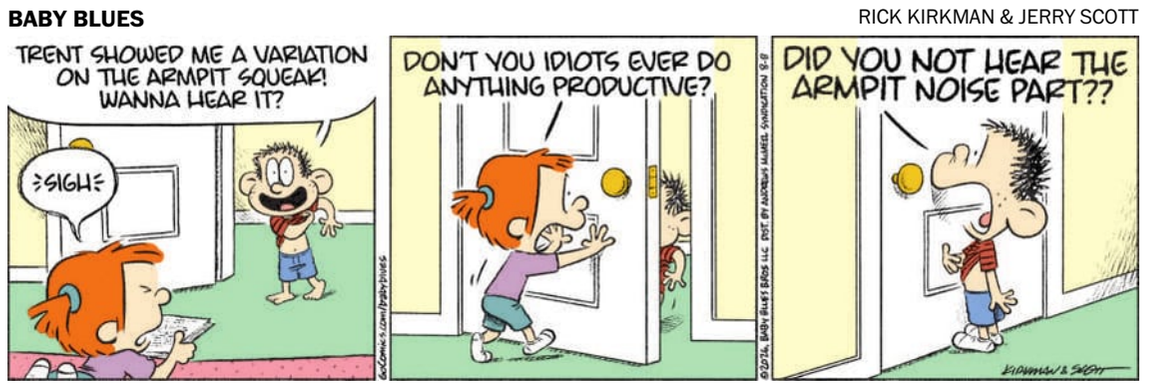
PRICKLY CITY MARSHALL RAMSEY

I HAVE PROOF OF INTERFERENCE IN THE 2020 ELECTION.
SO LOOK. ALL I WANT TO DO IS THIS...
I JUST WANT TO FIND, UH, 11,780 VOTES, WHICH IS ONE MORE THAN WE HAVE, BECAUSE WE WON THE STATE.
WAIT, THAT'S HIM!
TDS. TRUMP DEEP STATE.
8/8 PRICKLYCITY@GMAIL.COM

LOOSE PARTS DAVE BLAZEK

NON SEQUITUR WILEY

BABY BLUES RICK KIRKMAN & JERRY SCOTT


TRENT SHOWED ME A VARIATION ON THE ARMPIT SQUEAK! WANNA HEAR IT?
:SIGH:
DON'T YOU IDIOTS EVER DO ANYTHING PRODUCTIVE?
DID YOU NOT HEAR THE ARMPIT NOISE PART??

WALLACE THE BRAVE WILL HENRY

AMELIA!
oh, geez
WHERE'RE WALLACE AND ROSE?
ON THEIR WAY. THEY'LL BE HERE IN FIVE MINUTES
FIVE MINUTES, JUST YOU AND ME?
TRY NOT TO FALL IN LOVE
I'M TRYING TO AVOID SIMPLE ASSAULT

SPEED BUMP DAVE COVERLY

DENNIS THE MENACE H. KETCHAM

ON THE FASTRACK BILL HOLBROOK

SLIDE
FOUND THE DEAD SERVER?
LIVING WITH A GOTH WIFE, I'M ABLE TO SENSE IT.
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E-mail: bholbrook1@gmail.com

FAMILY CIRCUS BIL KEANE

REPLY ALL LITE DONNA A. LEWIS

You seem pretty confident in your position that Han shot first.
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8-8

BEETLE BAILEY GREG, BRIAN & NEAL WALKER

YOU TREAT ME LIKE GARBAGE!
THAT'S NOT ENTIRELY TRUE
YOU CAN GET OUT OF THE TRUCK BEFORE IT GOES TO THE DUMP
GARBAGE
8/8
GREG + MORT WALKER
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TELEVISION

8/8/26	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
4.1 WRC (NBC)	◆ All Ears	◆ Clear-Sh.	◆ Ninja Warrior Central Regional Finals				◆ Dateline NBC		◆ **NEWS**..
4.2 WRC (IND)	Frasier	Frasier	Columbo			Columbo			Foxworthy
5.1 WTTG (Fox)	◆ **MLB Baseball** Baltimore Orioles at Texas Rangers (Live)						◆ **Fox 5 at 10**		◆ **Fox 5**
7.1 WJLA (ABC)	◆ Wheel	◆ Jeopardy!	◆ The Rookie		◆ The Rookie		◆ The Rookie		◆ **News**
9.1 WUSA (CBS)	◆ Abich	◆ Abich	◆ Harlan		◆ 48 Hours		◆ 48 Hours		◆ **News**
14.1 WFDC (UNI)	◆ Piensa rápido VIP		◆ **Fútbol**	◆ **Leag Cup** Chivas de Guadalajara vs. FC Dallas (Live)					◆ **LeagCup**
20.1 WDCA (MNTV)	◆ JudgeJu..	◆ JudgeJu..	◆ **Fox 5 News** (Live)		◆ Family	◆ Family	◆ Family	◆ Family	◆ **Extra**
22.1 WMPT (PBS)	◆ Red, White and Rock (My Music Presents)					◆ Neil Diamond: August			◆ BritFloyd
26.1 WETA (PBS)	◆ Elvis '56			◆ Ken Burns: The Civil War			◆ John Williams		
32.1 WHUT (PBS)	(6:00) ◆ H..	◆ The Pointer Sisters: So Excited!			◆ Kings of Music			◆ Beatles	◆ Count
50.1 WDCW (CW)	(5:00) ◆ **NASCAR**		◆ **AVP Beach** League, Week 8 (Live)				◆ **PBR Team** Freedom Days		
66.1 WPXW (ION)	(6:30) ◆ **NWSL Soccer**			◆ **NWSL**-.. /(:45) ◆ **NWSL Soccer**				◆ **NWSL**-..	◆ Law-SVU
A&E	Storage Wars		Storage Wars		Storage Wars		Storage Wars		Storage
AMC	(5:00) Movie: B...	Movie: Bad Boys II ★★ (2003) Two detectives battle a drug kingpin in Miami.						Movie: I, Robot ★★ (2004)	
Animal Planet	Caught! Sharks		**Ultimate Shark Dive**		**Biggest Mako**		**Sharkzilla**		White
BET	The Equalizer		The Equalizer		Movie: Air ★★★ (2023) (P)				
Bravo	The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills		The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills		The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills		The Real Housewives of Orange County		Housew-ives/OC
Cartoon Network	Burgers	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Rick Morty	Rick Morty
CNN	**CNN Newsroom**		**Real Time With**		Decades In 1970s		Decades In 1960s		Real Time
Comedy Central	Movie: The Hangover ★★★ (2009)					Movie: The Hangover Part II ★★ (2011)			
Discovery	Expedition Unknown		Expedition Unknown		Expedition Unknown		Expedition Unknown		Expedition
Disney	Movie: UglyDolls ★★ (2019)			Chibiverse	Chibiverse	Phineas	Phineas	Phineas	Ladybug
E!	(6:30) Movie: Coyote Ugly (2000)			Movie: Sex and the City ★★ (2008)					
ESPN	(6:00) LLSWS North Carolina vs. TBA		**Banana Ball World Tour** Loco Beach Coconuts vs. Savannah Bananas (Live)				**MVPW-05: Johnson vs. Thorslund** (Live)		
ESPN2	(5:30) **WLL**	Meadow-lands	**Fling Golf Open**	**Paintball**	**Red Bull**	**Red Bull**	**Blimp**	**Bare Knuckle**	**Two Goalies**
Food Network	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners
Fox News	**Weekend** (Live)		**Life, Liberty** (Live)		**My View With** (Live)		**Saturday Night** (Live)		Gutfeld!
Freeform	(:10) Movie: Ratatouille ★★★ (2007) A French rat longs to become a chef.					(:45) Movie: Big Hero 6 ★★★ (2014) A robotics prodigy uncovers a dangerous plot.			
FX	Movie: Avengers: Endgame ★★★ (2019) The Avengers prepare for an epic showdown with Thanos.								Movie: Super Tr...
Hallmark	(6:00) Movie: The Real West (2024)		Movie: Absolutely Devoted to You (2026) (P)				Movie: Lost in Paradise (2026)		
Hallmark M&M	(6:00) Movie: Hailey Dean Mysteries: Dea...		Hailey Dean Mysteries				Murder, She Wrote		Murder ...
HBO	(6:30) Movie: The Strangers ★★ (2008)		Movie: The Strangers: Chapter 2 ★ (2025) (P)			(:40) House of the Dragon		(:45) Life, Larry and	(:20) Movie: ...
HGTV	Hunters	Hunters	Hunters	Hunters	Hunters	Hunters	**Hunters**	Hunters	Extreme
History	Skinwalker Ranch		Skinwalker Ranch		Skinwalker Ranch		(:05) Skinwalker		Skinwalker
Lifetime	(6:00) Movie: Girl in the Shed: Kidnapping of ...		Movie: She Stole My Son's Heart (2026) (P)				(:05) Movie: Kidnapped in Her Own Home: Martha Carelli Story (2026)		
MASN	**FanDuel Racing** (Live)						Touchdown Baltimore		SportsWr..
Monumental	Caps Classics				Front Row	Drive to	Drive to	Drive to	Caps
MSNBC	Connect With		**Crooked on MS NOW**		The Rachel		Last Word		The 11th
MTV	Movie: Mike and Dave Need Wedding Dates ★★ (2016)					Movie: Ted ★★★ (2012)			
Nat'l Geographic	To Catch a Smuggler		To Catch a Smuggler		**Catch a Smuggler**		To Catch a Smuggler		Catch..
Nickelodeon	Movie: PAW Patrol: The Mighty Movie (2023)				Friends	Friends	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang
NWSN	**Batya**		**NewsNation** (Live)		**NewsNation** (Live)		**NewsNation** (Live)		Batya
Paramount	Movie: Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade ★★★ (1989) Indy's hunt for his missing father leads to the Holy Grail.						Movie: Raiders of the Lost Ark ★★★★ (1981)		
Paramount+Sho	(6:45) Movie: Million Dollar Baby ★★★★ (2004)				Movie: Brave the Dark (2025) (P)				Movie: King's S...
Syfy	(6:30) Movie: Troy ★★★ (2004) Menelaus' brother, King Agamemnon declares war against Troy.					Movie: Speed ★★★ (1994) A transit bus is wired to explode if it drops below 50 mph.			
TBS	(4:45) Movie: Dark Kni...		Movie: The Dark Knight Rises ★★★ (2012) (P)						
TCM	(6:00) Movie: Thomas Crown Affair (1968)		Movie: The Blob ★★ (1958)			Movie: Bullitt ★★★ (1968) A San Francisco detective protects a government witness.			
TLC	Last Resort		Little Singles		Little Singles		Little Singles		Little
TNT	(4:00) Movie: Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of t...		**All Elite Wrestling: Collision** (Live)				Movie: The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (2003)		
Travel	Ghost Adventures		Ghost Adventures		**Ghost Adventures**		Ghost Adventures		Ghost Adv
TruTV	(:15) Movie: Wonder Woman ★★★ (2017)						Movie: Wonder Woman 1984 (20...		
TV Land	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	King
TV One	GoodTimes	GoodTimes	GoodTimes	GoodTimes	GoodTimes	GoodTim..	GoodTim..	GoodTim..	GoodTim..
USA Network	Law & Order: SVU		Law & Order: SVU		Law & Order: SVU		Law & Order: SVU		Pigeon
VH1	(5:00) Movie: Selena (...		Movie: Anaconda ★ (1997) (P)				Movie: 8 Mile ★★★ (2002)		
WNC8	Abich	**WorldNe**..	**20/20**				**WJLANe**..	WJLANews	Attkisson

LEGEND: Bold indicates new or live programs ◆ High Definition
Movie Ratings (from TMS) ★★★★ Excellent ★★★ Good ★★ Fair ★ Poor No stars: not rated

SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

5		9	8			6		
3	4			7			5	
				9	1			
						9	8	7
				6				
1	3	7						
			7	8				
	5			1			9	4
		1			4	3		8

8/8

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★★

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PREVIOUS SUDOKU SOLUTION

1	4	5	8	2	9	6	7	3
8	2	3	1	6	7	5	4	9
9	7	6	4	3	5	1	2	8
4	1	2	5	8	3	9	6	7
3	8	7	9	4	6	2	5	1
5	6	9	7	1	2	8	3	4
7	3	8	6	5	1	4	9	2
2	5	1	3	9	4	7	8	6
6	9	4	2	7	8	3	1	5

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SCRABBLEGRAMS

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A1	E1	E1	Y4	D2	J8	L1	RACK 1
A1	A1	E1	D2	S1	M3	B3	3rd Letter Double — RACK 2
A1	A1	E1	G2	N1	B3	D2	RACK 3
I1	U1	K5	C3	N1	L1	S1	Triple Word Score — RACK 4

PAR SCORE 155-165 BEST SCORE 232

FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. Finally, 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All the words are in the Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary, 5th Edition. SOLUTION TOMORROW

For more information on tournaments and clubs, email NASPA - North American SCRABBLE Players Association info@scrabbleplayers.org. Visit our website - www.scrabbleplayers.org. For puzzle inquiries contact scrgrams@gmail.com

08-08

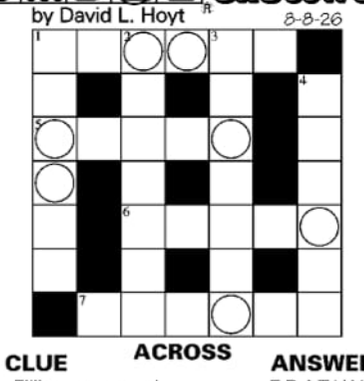
PREVIOUS SCRABBLEGRAMS SOLUTION

B3	A1	N1	D2	I1	T1	O1	RACK 1 = 60
D2	R1	O1	W4	S1	Y4		RACK 2 = 13
F4	O1	R1	B3	E1	A1	R1	RACK 3 = 86
M3	Y4	A1	L1	G2	I1	A1	RACK 4 = 67

PAR SCORE 150-160 TOTAL 226

JUMBLE CROSSWORDS

by David L. Hoyt 8-8-26



ACROSS

CLUE — **ANSWER**
1. Filling, as a meal — ERATHY
5. Trained unit — DAECR
6. Penniless — EOBRK
7. Identity category — NERGDE

DOWN

CLUE — **ANSWER**
1. Frantic — CCIETH
2. Clear to the ear — DILAUBE
3. Climber's grip — LHTEODO
4. Shared beneficiary — HCIREO

TRIPLE BONUS
The circled letters can be unscrambled to form three different BONUS answers.

CLUE: Supplied food for
CLUE: Produced
CLUE: Responded

How to play
Complete the crossword puzzle by looking at the clues and unscrambling the answers. When the puzzle is complete, unscramble the circled letters to solve the Bonus.

ANSWERS: 1A-Hearty 5A-Crane 6A-Broke 7A-Cavalier 1D-Hectic 2D-Auntie 3D-Tadpole 4D-Cover 5-Carried 6-Carried 7-Fractured
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HOROSCOPE

BIRTHDAY | AUGUST 8: You like to test yourself and be intellectually stimulated. You're strong-willed, courageous and energetic. This year you will reap the benefits of all your hard work. Expect power and leadership. You'll be busy. Seize opportunities in business dealings and act on them. Expect promotions, kudos, awards and acknowledgment. Bravo!

Moon Alert: There are no restrictions to shopping or important decisions today until 10 p.m. The Moon is in Gemini.

ARIES
(March 21-April 19)
You're in charge. You have lots of energy, especially when talking to others. You'll mean what you say and say what you mean. You're keen to socialize and have fun; nevertheless, serious discussions about practical plans will go well.

TAURUS
(April 20-May 20)
You have definite ideas about your finances today. Perhaps about ways to earn money or about making a major purchase. Your mind is focused. You might enjoy entertaining at home. You also might work behind the scenes. It's your call.

GEMINI
(May 21-June 20)
Be patient with others. Today the Moon is in your sign lined up with fiery Mars, making you aggressive and ready for anything. You won't back down from a fight. A conversation with someone older or more experienced might have a soothing effect. Today you'll take the initiative.

CANCER
(June 21-July 22)
This is a good day for financial discussions because you feel prepared for whatever is going to happen. Furthermore, research and behind-the-scenes knowledge might impress someone in authority – parents, bosses, teachers and VIPs. You'll say the right thing to the right person at the right time.

LEO
(July 23-Aug. 22)
You have a lot of energy today, which is why you might rally your troops and set them marching. Friends and members of groups might help you with your plans to play, or your plans to work. Your energy will go both ways today. You want to be prepared for the future.

VIRGO
(Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Today you're high-viz, and it might be because you're sticking your neck out a bit. You won't hesitate to be verbal in defending your own interests. You have definite ideas about banking and shared property. You are also probably holding some hidden cards that no one knows about.

LIBRA
(Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
You have definite ideas and strong opinions today, no question. You might lead a group or head up a committee. If talking to a spouse, partner or close friend, you will be firm about what you want to say, leaving no room for doubt.

SCORPIO
(Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
This is a powerful day for you! You make an excellent impression on everyone. And when it comes to discussing matters about sharing or dividing something, especially an inheritance or jointly held property, you will be specific and firm. Because of this, you'll get what you want.

SAGITTARIUS
(Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Make an extra effort to keep the peace with partners, spouses and close friends today, because you're opinionated, and you might be coming on like gangbusters. Ironically, you might attract someone like this to you. Either way, lower the volume. Everyone listens to a whisper.

CAPRICORN
(Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
Many people will choose today to socialize; you can as well. However, if you choose to work, you can be extremely productive. You're focused and energetic, and you know what you want. Count on the support you need to make necessary changes at home.

AQUARIUS
(Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
This is a party hard day! And you have very specific ideas about how you want to enjoy yourself. This is also a powerful day for those of you involved in sports, the arts or anything to do with educating or taking care of children. Your ideas are always innovative and original.

PISCES
(Feb. 19-March 20)
Family discussions will be intense today. Someone will definitely speak their mind. Nevertheless, it could create an upbeat social scene, or it will contribute to the energy of others to be productive. It looks like a win-win situation for everyone.

— Georgia Nicols

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BRIDGE

N-S VULNERABLE

NORTH
♠ A Q 5
♥ K Q 8 3
♦ K 5 4
♣ 10 6 3

WEST
♠ J 10 9 4
♥ 6 4
♦ 10 8 7 2
♣ K J 4

EAST
♠ 8 6 3
♥ 9 7
♦ A Q 9 6
♣ 9 8 7 5

SOUTH (D)
♠ K 7 2
♥ A J 10 5 2
♦ J 3
♣ A Q 2

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	Pass	2 NT	Pass
4 ♥	All Pass		

Opening lead — ♠ J

Simple Saturday columns focus on basic technique and logical thinking.

A principle of play — as basic as you can get — is to lead toward your high cards. With 3-2 in dummy opposite K-4 in your hand, you lead from dummy to your king. (It's better, of course, if left-hand opponent leads the suit for you.)

At today's four hearts, South wins the first spade with the king and draws trumps. He has nine top tricks and chances for one more. Say he leads a diamond to dummy's king. East takes the ace and shifts to a club: deuce, jack, three. West leads a diamond to East's queen, and when East leads another club, West's king scores for down one.

South should extend the principle of leading to his high cards. After he draws trumps, he leads a diamond from dummy toward his jack. When East has the queen, South is sure of a diamond trick.

If West had the queen of diamonds, South could lead toward the king. If that failed, he would have a club play in reserve.

DAILY QUESTION

You hold:
♠ A Q 5 ♥ K Q 8 3
♦ K 5 4 ♣ 10 6 3

You are the dealer. What is your opening call?

ANSWER: This is a mandatory opening bid, with 14 points and at least three "Quick Tricks." In the modern style, which embraces "five-card majors," you must not open one heart, though I might do so with a hand such as J 7 5, A K Q 10, A 3 2, 7 6 4. Hold your nose and open one club. (For some pairs, a one-diamond opening would promise at least four cards.)

— Frank Stewart

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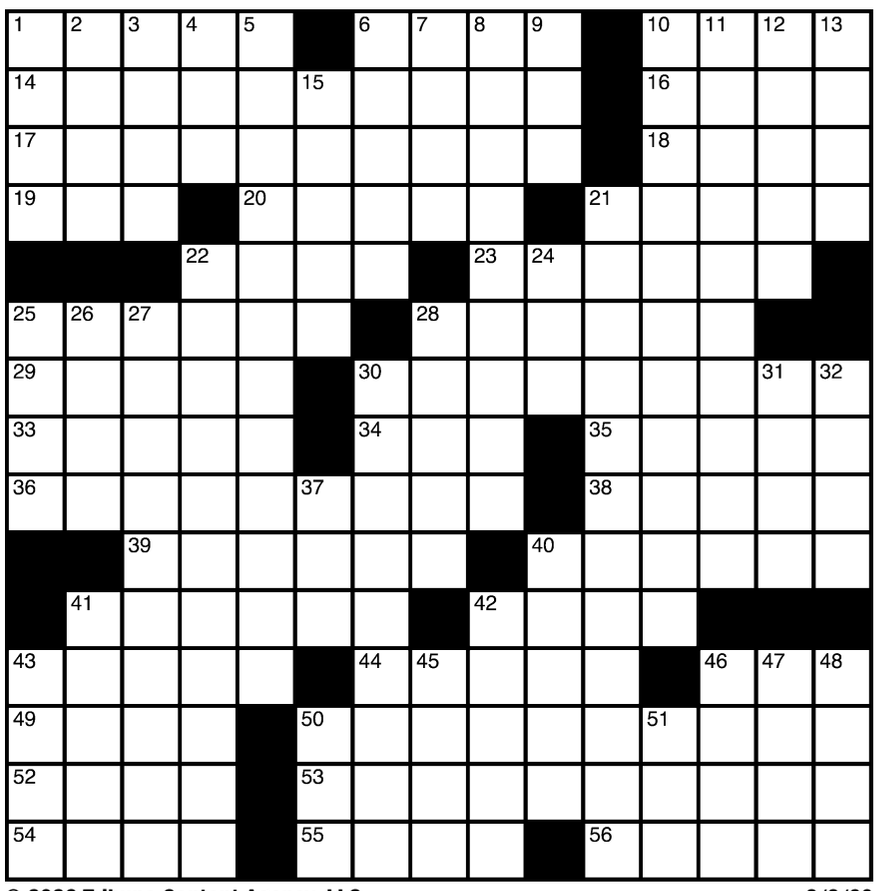
LA TIMES CROSSWORD

By Kyle Dolan



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FRIDAY'S LA TIMES SOLUTION

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The Washington Post
SPORTS
SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 2026 SU B7

In return home, Nats get back on track

NATIONALS 5, REDS 3

Lile powers cathartic win after trades, rough trip

BY NOAH WHITE

It had been a long week by the time the Washington Nationals returned to their home clubhouse Friday afternoon. A team in the wild-card hunt, losing three key contributors at the trade deadline, during a stretch of seven losses in eight games against two division rivals — "rough," as Daylen Lile put it with a shrug and a frown.

So maybe it was a form of exacting pent-up frustration, but when Lile saw his third pitch of the night against the Cincinnati Reds (56-59), his bat couldn't turn quickly enough. It didn't hurt that when the ball landed in the second deck in right field, CJ Abrams and Brady House were on the corners. Neither did it hurt that three innings later, Lile decided he still had more to release, this time off the right-field wall for a double.

Only when, two at-bats later, catcher Harry Ford notched his second MLB homer, driving in Lile, did the outfielder smile. After a disastrous road stint during which the Nationals (57-61) fell from a game above .500 to five games below, a 5-3 win was a necessary confidence boost.

"The biggest thing is just getting our confidence back," Butera said. "Playing some good baseball and playing with energy."

With James Wood on the IL, offense needed to come in doses. Covering for an MVP candidate leading the major leagues in runs (100) and walks (90) isn't the work of a call-up alone, no matter Andrew Pinckney's effort on Thursday. "We need production from everybody a little bit more, right, to be able to fill that gap that Woody leaves, of course," Butera said. "We need some guys to step up and play well."

Specifically, Washington would need a bit more from some of the established guys. Butera joked that it could be Lile's night, as the last time the Nationals faced Cincinnati in May, he had five hits, three homers and seven RBI in the series. Hopefully, "seeing that uniform again brings some confidence," he said through a grin.

Then it just happened. Exactly as Butera said. And he just kept smirking in the dugout. By the time Lile struck out in his third at-bat, the Nationals had a two-run lead, something unimaginable in recent days.

Butera made other attempts at jostling Washington's offense to life. CJ Abrams leading off was the most recognizable to the box score watcher. No need for a long debrief on that one. "I just want him to provide a spark for us," Butera said. "Want to get him up

SEE NATIONALS ON B11

Reds at Nationals
6:45 p.m., Nationals.TV

NICK WASS/AP

Stefon Diggs, who played at Good Counsel High and the University of Maryland, is now set to catch passes for the Commanders.

Happy homecoming

After first practice with Commanders, Diggs says he's ready to 'put on for my city'

BY TASHAN REED

Stefon Diggs is back home.

The Maryland native officially signed with the Washington Commanders and practiced for the first time Friday. He has a one-year contract worth up to $12 million, according to a person familiar with the deal, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the terms are not public.

It's a low-risk, high-reward move for Washington. Diggs, meanwhile, not only gets another chance to try to win at the highest level but is closer to his roots again.

"I want to put on for my city," Diggs said Friday. "It definitely means a lot to me. It pulls on your heartstrings a little bit. I know the city is behind me; I know I've got a support system here, and I know I've got a lot of love here. All I want to do is make people proud, make the city proud, and the best way you can do that is go far. I don't know where — I'm not going to say where, you don't want to jinx it or nothing — but I want to go far, and I want to be consistent and be a puzzle piece to this team in a positive way."

Diggs, who will turn 33 in November, has been one of the best wide receivers in the NFL since he was drafted by the Minnesota Vikings in 2015. From 2018 to 2023, he had six straight seasons of 1,000 receiving yards. He failed to meet that mark in 2024 after suffering a torn ACL eight games into the season, but he bounced back last year with 85 catches for 1,013 yards and four touchdowns across 17 games with the New England Patriots.

The Patriots released Diggs in March, and he went unsigned through the initial wave of free agency, so he was inactive during offseason workouts. He spent that time working out twice a day on a regular basis to keep himself in shape.

"My biggest thing is I woke up in the morning and I worked," Diggs said. "It doesn't matter where I go, it's more so when you get there, are you ready? Is your body physically ready? Are you in a good space mentally? … I wanted to be

SEE COMMANDERS ON B9

Make it six: Mystics hold on to top Atlanta

MYSTICS 79, DREAM 74

BY BAILEY JOHNSON

Before Friday night, the Washington Mystics hadn't won six games in a row since their championship season in 2019. And down the stretch against the Atlanta Dream, it looked like they might not get there.

With 32 seconds left and a 16-point lead cut to three, Coach Sydney Johnson called a timeout. The Mystics' three best players each had an opportunity for a dagger, and after Sonia Citron and Kiki Iriafen passed up a shot, it fell to Shakira Austin, who finished over two defenders with 9.7 seconds to go and sealed a 79-74 victory at CareFirst Arena.

"We had an idea of what we wanted to execute. We came off and didn't get that first or second look. Frankly, sometimes when that happens, it comes down to the fundamentals. Not necessarily making a play on your own, but making a play together," Johnson said. "… Kira made a big-time play, but I think as a group, to go beyond the first and second look and to make something happen together, that is also a mark of this team growing in these big moments."

The Mystics (18-12) moved up to seventh place in the league, percentage points ahead of the New York Liberty and six games above the ninth-place Los Angeles Sparks. With each game, their first playoff berth since 2023 appears more likely.

Friday's game pitted strength against strength: Atlanta came in leading the league in both offensive and defensive rebounding rate, with Washington second in both categories. When the buzzer sounded, the Mystics had a 46-40 advantage on the glass, led by 11 rebounds apiece from Austin and Lauren Betts, who set a career high.

Washington also set a franchise record by blocking 12 shots. Austin led the way with five, tying a career high.

"We're just athletic, so I think we just timed it right and defended without fouling," Austin said of the blocks.

The Dream, which came in No. 4 in the league standings, led for the first 2 minutes 31 seconds. Once Washington pulled in front with a 13-0 run, it never trailed again.

The team's three-headed monster led the way — Austin scored 21 points, Iriafen had 15 and Citron 14 — but contributions from up and down the bench helped the Mystics throughout the game.

Cotie McMahon — who was apparently left off the Dallas Wings' scouting report earlier this week, then went for 18 points off the bench in the Mystics' dramatic comeback win — made three baskets in the final 2:20 of the first half, each one drawing a more emphatic cele-

SEE MYSTICS ON B11

Mercury at Mystics
Sunday, 3 p.m., Monumental

PERSPECTIVE

Jordan's Wizards run can guide James

BY MIKE SIELSKI
Philadelphia Inquirer

PHILADELPHIA — There is no perfect historical analogy for what LeBron James is attempting with the Philadelphia 76ers or for what the 76ers are attempting with him. He will turn 42 in late December. He has appeared in more NBA games than anyone. He will soon begin his 24th season in the league without a pause — no temporary retirements, no full seasons missed because of injury. And he has joined a team that has not won a championship since 1983, was already capable of competing for one next season, and because of his arrival will be expected to win one.

The figure to whom James is most often compared, of course, is Michael Jordan: for records and achievements accumulated, for championships won, for the aesthetics of their styles of play. Now they have another point of relative similarity. Jordan was 38 when he ended his second break from the game and played two seasons with the Washington Wizards. If the collective stakes of his return weren't nearly as high as James's decision to sign with the 76ers — the 2001-03 Wizards went 74-90, missed the playoffs both years, and even with an in-his-prime Jordan wouldn't have had a prayer of winning a title — he still provided a useful precedent for how the daily drama of James's time with the 76ers might unfold.

The details of that story were preserved in a book — "When Nothing Else Matters: Michael Jordan's Last Comeback," by Michael Leahy — that is as good as anything ever written about any topic related to basketball. Leahy was a staff writer for The Washington Post at the time he immersed himself in Jordan's world, but he was not a sportswriter; he had nothing to lose, no sources to burn or fans to alienate, by documenting Jordan's tenure in Washington with remarkable depth and unsparing honesty.

Published in 2004, "When Nothing Else Matters" has been memory-holed for more than two decades. It didn't refresh and amplify the mythology around Jordan in the way "The Jordan Rules" or "The Last Dance" did, so it doesn't resonate in the public consciousness much anymore. But it does serve as a cautionary tale about the nature of

SEE SIELSKI ON B11

MATT SLOCUM/AP

LeBron James, left, is joining forces with Joel Embiid to help make the 76ers NBA title contenders.

THE DAY IN SPORTS

PRO BASKETBALL

Cavaliers' Harden has gun charge dismissed

A misdemeanor gun charge against all-star Cleveland Cavaliers guard **James Harden** in Texas was dismissed after he completed an alternative resolution program allowing him to avoid a criminal record, court records show.

Harris County Criminal Court Judge **Alex Salgado** in Houston dismissed the criminal charge Thursday at the request of the Harris County district attorney's office following Harden's completion of an alternative resolution program. Such programs allow defendants to avoid a criminal conviction by doing community service. Court documents don't detail the terms of Harden's agreement.

Harden was arrested June 13 in Houston after police found that he had a handgun in his vehicle. Texas law makes it a misdemeanor to have a gun "in plain view" in a vehicle without a license, punishable by up to a year in jail and a fine of up to $4,000.

Neither the district attorney's office nor Harden's attorney in Houston immediately responded to email and phone messages Friday seeking comment. The Cavaliers also did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment. ...

Kawhi Leonard, who is under investigation into allegations of impermissible payments to skirt salary-cap rules, also had an undisclosed multi-million-dollar deal with Daktronics, the company that designed the video board at the Los Angeles Clippers' home arena, the podcast "Pablo Torre Finds Out" reported.

An unnamed person told the podcast that the sponsorship was "1,000 percent a way to circumvent the salary cap. It was funneling money from the Clippers through Daktronics back to Kawhi."

Neither the NBA nor the Clippers had responded to requests for comment as of Thursday night, according to the Athletic and ESPN. ...

Memphis Grizzlies forward **Brandon Clarke** died of the effects of heroin and cocaine, authorities said.

The Los Angeles County Department of Medical Examiner said the 29-year-old basketball player's death was accidental.

Clarke was found dead inside a home near Los Angeles on May 11. A person familiar with the terms of the investigation told the Associated Press after the Grizzlies announced Clarke's passing that drug paraphernalia was found at the residence. The person had spoken on the condition of anonymity because those details had not been released publicly. ...

As discussion surrounding transgender women and whether they should be allowed to compete in women's sports continues to run rampant, the WNBA Player's Association put out a statement that made its stance on the matter known.

"The WNBPA represents 200+ individual people with different lived experiences, cultures, lifestyles and opinions. We embrace justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion," the statement read. "Those are the values that unite this Union and allow it to protect women's sports while creating transformational change. Hate, abuse, and demonization of any person or group of people, including transgender people, only fuel fear, division, and harm.

"We will continue to have hard conversations. But we will not be used as political pawns."

This topic, as it relates to the WNBA, ramped up in July when Indiana Fever guard **Sophie Cunningham** shared her opinions while being interviewed for an ESPN story, saying she doesn't believe transgender women should be allowed to play women's sports. ...

Kennedy Burke had 15 points, **Brittney Griner** blocked a three-point attempt at the buzzer, and the host Connecticut Sun rallied to beat the Phoenix Mercury, 75-72, in Uncasville.

Connecticut honored **Alyssa Thomas** before the game, retiring the No. 25 jersey she wore when playing for the franchise for 11 years. The team is moving to Houston next year, so the Sun has been honoring many of its former great players and coaches this season.

DAVID BUTLER II/IMAGN IMAGES

Making the leap

The Connecticut Sun and president Jennifer Rizzotti, right, honored Alyssa Thomas before Friday night's game, retiring her No. 25 at Mohegan Sun Arena in Uncasville. Thomas, a former Maryland star, spent her first 11 WNBA seasons with the Sun.

SPOTLIGHT: SOCCER

Norway's federation wants Infantino out

BY JAMES ROBSON

World Cup investment plan, peace prize and Balogun tiff cited as areas of concern

MANCHESTER, ENGLAND — Norway's soccer federation wants Gianni Infantino to step down immediately, piling more pressure on FIFA's embattled president.

Infantino is facing a revolt after his failed plan to sell stakes in the World Cup.

The Norwegian federation held a meeting Thursday, and President Lise Klaveness said the decision had been made to ask Infantino to resign.

"When trust is gone, leadership must also be assessed. We therefore believe that Gianni Infantino's time as FIFA President should be over, and ask him to resign," Klaveness said via translation Friday.

The announcement is the latest blow for Infantino as the fallout continues over his controversial plan to sell profits in the World Cup through a commercial subsidiary that would have been called the FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE).

European soccer's governing body UEFA said Thursday its threat to boycott the World Cup and other FIFA competitions remained in place despite FIFA abandoning and apologizing for its failed plan.

It reiterated its stance that it had lost confidence in Infantino.

Earlier this week, Infantino appeared to have held off the potential of an internal revolt during a summit meeting with top staff in Rabat, Morocco.

FIFA said the president had been given the full support of those in attendance.

But UEFA's response — followed by Norway's direct call for him to resign — shows the sense of anger from Europe, in particular, remains strong.

The English Football Association has also withdrawn its support for Infantino's reelection next March. He did, however, receive backing from Mexico's federation.

The Norwegian federation said it would raise concerns with FIFA regarding FFE, the peace prize awarded to Donald Trump and the suspension of Folarin Balogun's one-match ban at the World Cup.

"FIFA needs new leadership to rebuild trust, strengthen good governance and ensure that the organization's own reforms are actually implemented," Klaveness said.

— Associated Press

TELEVISION AND RADIO

MLB

4 p.m.	**Athletics at Boston** » Fox Sports 1
6:45 p.m.	**Cincinnati at Washington** » Nationals.TV, WJFK (106.7 FM)
7:15 p.m.	**Baltimore at Texas** » WTTG (Ch. 5), WBFF (Ch. 45), WIYY (97.9 FM), WSBN (630 AM)

WNBA

1 p.m.	**Las Vegas at Minnesota** » WUSA (Ch. 9), WJZ (Ch. 13)
3:30 p.m.	**Indiana at Chicago** » WJLA (Ch. 7), WMAR (Ch. 2)
8:30 p.m.	**Seattle at Portland** » NBA TV

NFL

Noon	**Hall of Fame Enshrinement** » ESPN, NFL Network

GOLF

9 a.m.	**U.S. Women's Amateur, quarterfinals** » Golf Channel
12:15 p.m.	**LIV Golf: New York, third round** » WTTG (Ch. 5), WBFF (Ch. 45)
1 p.m.	**PGA Tour: Wyndham Championship, third round** » Golf Channel
3 p.m.	**PGA Tour: Wyndham Championship, third round** » WUSA (Ch. 9), WJZ (Ch. 13)
3 p.m.	**U.S. Women's Amateur, semifinals** » Golf Channel

MOTORSPORTS

11 a.m.	**MotoGP: Great Britain Grand Prix, sprint race** » Fox Sports 1
Noon	**Indy NXT: Grand Prix of Portland, practice** » Fox Sports 1
12:30 p.m.	**NASCAR O'Reilly Auto Parts Series: HyVee Perks 250, qualifying** » WDCW (Ch. 50), WNUV (Ch. 54)
1 p.m.	**IndyCar: Grand Prix of Portland, practice** » Fox Sports 1
2 p.m.	**NASCAR Cup Series: Iowa Corn 350, practice and qualifying** » TruTV
3 p.m.	**Indy NXT: Grand Prix of Portland, qualifying** » Fox Sports 1
5 p.m.	**NASCAR O'Reilly Auto Parts Series: HyVee Perks 250** » WDCW (Ch. 50), WNUV (Ch. 54)
7 p.m.	**IndyCar: Grand Prix of Portland, qualifying** » Fox Sports 1

SOCCER

8 a.m.	**Club friendly: AC Milan vs. Chelsea** » CBS Sports Network
1 p.m.	**Club friendly: Real Madrid at Ferencvaros** » CBS Sports Network
3:30 p.m.	**Portuguese Primeira Liga: Sporting at Estrela** » BeIN Sports
4 p.m.	**NWSL: Utah at Denver** » Ion
5 p.m.	**Canadian Premier League: Inter Toronto at Pacific FC** » Fox Sports 2
6:30 p.m.	**NWSL: North Carolina at Washington** » Ion
8 p.m.	**Canadian Premier League: Cavalry at Supra du Québec** » Fox Sports 2
8:45 p.m.	**NWSL: Kansas City at Houston** » Ion
9 p.m.	**Concacaf Leagues Cup, group stage: Dallas at Guadalajara** » Fox Sports 1
10 p.m.	**USL Championship: New Mexico at Monterey Bay** » CBS Sports Network
11 p.m.	**Concacaf Leagues Cup, group stage: Toluca** » **at Los Angeles FC** » Fox Sports 1

TENNIS

11 a.m.	**ATP/WTA: Canadian Open, early rounds** » Tennis Channel

PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL

7 p.m.	**Canadian Football League: Hamilton at British Columbia** » CBS Sports Network

BOXING

10 p.m.	**Most Valuable Promotions 5: Cherneka Johnson vs. Dina Thorslund** » ESPN

PROFESSIONAL SOFTBALL

7 p.m.	**Athletes Unlimited All-Star Cup: Team Garcia vs. Team Corrick** » ESPNU

PROFESSIONAL LACROSSE

1 p.m.	**Premier Lacrosse League: Denver vs. New York** » WJLA (Ch. 7), WMAR (Ch. 2)
5:30 p.m.	**Women's Lacrosse League: California at Boston** » ESPN2

PROFESSIONAL BEACH VOLLEYBALL

8 p.m.	**Women's Association of Volleyball Professionals: Austin vs. LA Launch** » WDCW (Ch. 50), WNUV (Ch. 54)
9 p.m.	**Men's Association of Volleyball Professionals: Austin vs. LA Launch** » WDCW (Ch. 50), WNUV (Ch. 54)

HORSE RACING

5 p.m.	**Whitney Stakes (post time 6:33 p.m.)** » WTTG (Ch. 5), WBFF (Ch. 45)

HOCKEY

2 p.m.	**Hlinka Gretzky Cup, third place: Finland vs. TBD** » NHL Network
7 p.m.	**Hlinka Gretzky Cup, final: Canada vs. TBD** » NHL Network

BASEBALL

8 p.m.	**Banana Ball: Savannah Bananas vs. Loco Beach Coconuts** » ESPN2

LITTLE LEAGUE SOFTBALL WORLD SERIES — SEMIFINALS

3 p.m.	**Kentucky vs. New Jersey** » ESPN2
6 p.m.	**North Carolina vs. Florida** » ESPN

COLLEGES

Former Terp Wyatt set for return to Hoosiers

Defensive lineman **Kellan Wyatt** decided to return for his fifth season with the defending national champion Indiana Hoosiers, a person with knowledge of the decision told the AP.

Wyatt becomes the second starting linemen from last season's title run to come back since last week's U.S. District Court ruling in Colorado granting players from the 2022 high school graduating class one more year of eligibility. Coach **Curt Cignetti** confirmed Wednesday that all-Big Ten honorable mention defensive end **Stephen Daley** also had returned following the ruling.

The NCAA plans to appeal the court decision.

A former first-team All-Met at Archbishop Spalding, Wyatt started the first seven games in 2025 before a season-ending knee injury. The transfer from Maryland finished his first year at Indiana with 27 tackles, eight tackles for loss and 2.5 sacks.

Wyatt was not selected in April's NFL draft, which along with the court ruling opened the door for his return. ...

After attempting to land an NFL contract, versatile offensive lineman **Cole Hutson** is rejoining Texas on a newly gained fifth year of eligibility.

Hutson, who has played in 48 games with 23 starts at multiple positions for Texas, entered the draft after exhausting his eligibility last fall. ...

Darrion Williams signed with Texas Tech for a fifth season of men's college basketball, returning to the Lubbock campus after being North Carolina State's leading scorer last season.

The Red Raiders announced the signings of Williams, a forward who previously played for them from 2023-25, and transfer forward **Jamichael Stillwell** from Central Florida. ...

Alcorn State said it hired former NBA guard **Monta Ellis** as general manager of the men's basketball program.

GOLF

Hossler pulls in front at eventful Wyndham

Beau Hossler made an 11-foot birdie putt on his final hole for a 3-under-par 67 that gave him a one-stroke lead in the Wyndham Championship, which might have been the least consequential development in the final event of the PGA Tour's regular season.

Hossler has never won on the PGA Tour and needs nothing short of victory at Sedgefield Country Club in Greensboro, North Carolina, to be among the top 70 in the FedEx Cup who advance to the postseason.

He was at 12-under 128 and led by one shot over former University of Virginia star **Ben James** and **Jordan Smith** of England.

The first step was making the 36-hole cut, and there was plenty of drama. **Keegan Bradley**, who is at No. 72 in the FedEx Cup, was well outside the projected cut until making birdie on three of his last six holes for a 67 to finish at 3-under 137.

It came down to the final few groups. At one point, **Christiaan Bezuidenhout** had a 20-foot birdie putt and **Ben Kohles** had a 15-foot birdie putt on his final hole. Either one would have knocked out Bradley, **Andrew Putnam** (No. 73) and **Austin Smotherman** (No. 76).

Both missed, and those players who are on the bubble eventually got a little breathing room when **Davis Chatfield** bogeyed his last hole to move the 3-under number to a tie for 64th. The top 65 and ties make the cut. ...

Rory McIlroy committed to participate in the FedEx Cup Playoffs opener at next week's FedEx St. Jude Championship in Memphis, the PGA Tour said.

SOCCER

England forward Toney faces an assault charge

England forward **Ivan Toney** was charged with assault after an incident at a nightclub, police said.

Authorities said Toney was charged July 31 with assault "causing actual bodily harm." The alleged incident took place in December at a nightclub in the Soho district of London.

Police did not immediately give any other information about what happened.

BBC Sports said a spokesperson for Toney said the player "acknowledges the charge and although he is naturally shocked, he looks forward to being given the opportunity to clear his name in court."

Toney, who plays for Al-Ahli in the Saudi Arabian league, is set to appear in court Sept. 24. ...

The LA Galaxy acquired forward **Hirving "Chucky" Lozano** on loan from San Diego FC for the rest of the MLS season, with an option to make the move permanent through trade.

The move finally ends a long, uncomfortable standoff between Lozano and San Diego. ...

Chicago Fire defender **Mbekezeli Mbokazi** will miss the remainder of the season with a thigh injury. ...

Atlanta United acquired midfielder **Mauricio Amaro** from Uruguayan topflight side Defensor Sporting.

HOCKEY

Longtime King Kopitar will have jersey retired

The Los Angeles Kings will retire former captain **Anze Kopitar**'s No. 11 jersey during the 2026-27 season and honor him with a statue outside Crypto.com Arena.

Both events will happen before the Kings' game against the Montreal Canadiens on Feb. 24.

A two-time Stanley Cup champion with the Kings, Kopitar played 20 seasons for the franchise before retiring at the end of the 2025-26 season.

CYCLING

Niewiadoma-Phinney leads Women's Tour

Katarzyna Niewiadoma-Phinney launched a decisive attack up Mont Ventoux to win the seventh stage of the Women's Tour de France and take the overall lead from **Marlen Reusser**.

The 2024 champion, who was in tears as she put on the yellow jersey, now leads 2023 champion **Demi Vollering** by 15 seconds and Reusser by 39 with two stages left.

Reusser and Vollering could not follow Niewiadoma-Phinney when she broke away about nine kilometers (six miles) from the top of Ventoux.

— From news services

KEVIN TERRELL/GETTY IMAGES

Running back Omarion Hampton was limited to nine games last season but still rushed for 545 yards, with 15 carries of 15 yards or more.

Which 2025 draft picks are poised for breakouts?

With clean bills of health or larger roles, players can bloom in year two

BY JOSH DUBOW

Some rookies take little time to adjust to the NFL, such as last season's offensive and defensive rookies of the year, Tetairoa McMillan and Carson Schwesinger.

They were among several rookies who made major impacts in 2025, including versatile defender Nick Emmanwori, who helped elevate a defense that led the Seattle Seahawks to a Super Bowl title; tackles Armand Membou and Kelvin Banks; and pass catchers Tyler Warren and Emeka Egbuka.

But failing to become a star in year one doesn't mean a draft pick was wasted.

Here's a look at some players who showed promise as rookies in 2025 who now have a chance to break out and become stars in their second seasons in the NFL:

Arizona Cardinals defensive tackle Walter Nolen: As a rookie, Nolen never really got started — he missed the beginning of the season with a calf injury, then was shut down early with a knee injury. Nolen had flashes in his limited time in six games that showed why Arizona drafted him 16th overall. He had two sacks and 15 pressures in just 99 pass rush opportunities, according to Pro Football Focus, and also returned a fumble for a touchdown. If he can have close to that kind of production in more extensive time, he could quickly become one of the top pass-rushing tackles in the game.

ROSS D. FRANKLIN/AP

Defensive tackle Walter Nolen had 15 pressures in six games last year, suggesting a bright future as a pass rusher for the Cardinals.

Los Angeles Chargers running back Omarion Hampton: After being drafted 22nd overall, Hampton rushed for 545 yards in nine games behind an injury-riddled offensive line. With tackles Joe Alt and Rashawn Slater expected back from injuries and Hampton healthy after dealing with ankle injuries, he is positioned for a big season in new coordinator Mike McDaniel's offense. McDaniel has a history of creating big plays for speedy players such as Hampton, who had 15 carries for at least 15 yards in limited action last season.

Chicago Bears wide receiver Luther Burden: Early in the offseason, Coach Ben Johnson said he was "buying Luther Burden stock." There's a good reason to do so. The second-round pick put up solid numbers as a rookie with 47 receptions for 652 yards and two touchdowns in the regular season. But he had some big performances late in the season that showed he has the potential to do even more, highlighted by his eight catches for 138 yards and a touchdown in a Week 17 game against the San Francisco 49ers. Burden averaged 2.69 yards per route run during the regular season, according to Pro Football Focus, ranking third in the league among wide receivers.

Dallas Cowboys defensive end Donovan Ezeiruaku: After trading away Micah Parsons before the start of last season, Dallas was lacking on the defensive line. That put added pressure on Ezeiruaku to perform at a high level immediately as a second-round pick. He was strong against the run but had only two sacks and 36 pressures as a rookie, according to PFF. The Cowboys have better talent around him, with Quinnen Williams there all season on the inside and Rashan Gary and rookie Malachi Lawrence helping on the outside, so Ezeiruaku is in position to be an even more effective pass rusher in year two.

San Francisco 49ers defensive back Upton Stout: San Francisco used its first five picks last season on defense, with much of the focus on big bodies on the defensive line. But the smallest player showed some of the most promise, with the 5-foot-9 Stout flashing as a third rounder. He excelled in the slot last season and could be in position to make even splashier plays with a year of experience under his belt after recording four tackles for loss, two quarterback hits, five passes defended, a forced fumble and a sack last season.

Kansas City Chiefs cornerback Nohl Williams: After trading Trent McDuffie and losing Jaylen Watson in free agency, Kansas City is planning to go young at corner with No. 6 pick Mansoor Delane and Williams, a third-rounder last season, as the potential starters. Williams played just less than half of the defensive snaps as a rookie but had a strong finish to the season in coverage in a sign of potential bigger things to come this season.

— Associated Press

NOTES

Titans make Skoronski the highest-paid guard

FROM NEWS SERVICES

The Tennessee Titans announced Friday the signing of offensive lineman Peter Skoronski to a multiyear extension making him the NFL's highest-paid guard.

A person familiar with the terms, speaking on the condition of anonymity because they were not announced, told the Associated Press the four-year deal is worth $100 million, with $88 million of that guaranteed.

ESPN and the NFL Network first reported the terms of the contract, making the 11th pick of the 2023 draft the league's highest-paid guard.

"I love this organization, I love this city, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to continue representing this franchise," Skoronski said in a statement.

Skoronski missed three of his first four games as a rookie after being drafted out of Northwestern. He has started 47 straight games, not missing an offensive snap in either of the past two seasons.

His 48 starts are a franchise best for a player under the age of 25 since the beginning of the 1999 season. Skoronski just turned 25, and nobody on the roster has started more consecutive games than his 47.

• **BILLS:** General Manager Brandon Beane continued prioritizing protecting quarterback Josh Allen by signing starting right guard O'Cyrus Torrence to a four-year contract extension with $46 million in guarantees.

The Bills' line has stayed mostly intact since 2024. And the unit's four returning starters from last season, including left tackle Dion Dawkins, are now under contract through at least 2027.

The 26-year-old Torrence, a second-round pick in 2023 out of Florida, has 57 career starts, including playoffs. He was part of a line that allowed the NFL's fewest sacks in both 2023 and 2024 and last season played a role in James Cook leading the league in rushing yards.

• **CHIEFS:** Coach Andy Reid said it is unlikely quarterback Patrick Mahomes will play in Kansas City's preseason opener against the Los Angeles Rams next week, and the two-time MVP could skip the three-game exhibition slate entirely.

That's not necessarily a surprise given Mahomes underwent surgery to repair torn ligaments in his left knee in December.

• **TEXANS:** Houston reinstated second-year wide receiver and return man Jaylin Noel from the nonfootball injury list.

Noel, 23, caught 26 passes for 292 yards and two touchdowns in 17 games last season. He was sidelined with a right pinkie injury that he sustained while working out before training camp.

• **COLTS:** The NFL suspended Indianapolis cornerback Cam Taylor-Britt one game for violating its personal conduct policy, and he will not play in the season opener against the visiting Baltimore Ravens on Sept. 13.

On Jan. 6, 2026, Taylor-Britt submitted a guilty plea for charges of reckless driving and driving without a valid driver's license. The charges stemmed from a pair of 2025 traffic stops, and the four-year veteran spent five days in jail.

• **BEARS:** Chicago added significant experience to its secondary by signing safety Xavier Woods, who has 121 starts in nine NFL seasons.

The Bears placed defensive back Dallis Flowers on injured reserve following an injury to his right leg in Thursday's practice.

• **SAINTS:** Linebacker Deion Jones will complete his tour of playing for each NFC South team by signing a one-year deal with New Orleans, ESPN reported.

• **FALCONS:** Atlanta released linebacker Troy Andersen, a second-round pick in 2022 once viewed as a rising star on the team's defense, and signed wide receiver Kristian Wilkerson.

GEORGE WALKER IV/AP

Peter Skoronski, the 11th pick in the 2023 draft by the Titans, has started 47 straight games, better than anyone else on the roster.

After first practice with the Commanders, Diggs is ready to 'put on for my city'

COMMANDERS FROM B7

prepared."

Excluding the 2024 season when he got injured, Diggs has led his teams in targets and has been the clear No. 1 option every year since 2019. That will be different with the Commanders, given the presence of Terry McLaurin.

McLaurin, a second-team all-pro in 2024, is the first wideout named to an all-pro team Diggs has played with since Cole Beasley in 2021. While Diggs and McLaurin are on the wrong side of 30, they should remain a potent receiving duo.

Diggs brings a ton of versatility to the table. He will start as the "Z" wide receiver, who lines up off the line of scrimmage, but he also will spend a lot of time working from the slot. He believes his skill set can help unlock the offense.

"If you want the ball, you got to be able to move around," Diggs said. "I mean, you can go play one spot, but they cloud coverage and they double, and that makes it harder. It's good being around other players that can ball. Like, it's going to be hard to double somebody in this offense: You've got guys that can make plays, you guys can make plays out of the backfield, you've got a mobile quarterback."

The Commanders were also impressed by Diggs's leadership ability. Although McLaurin has guided the wide receiver room for years now, there's nothing wrong with having another player capable of teaching younger players the ropes.

NICK WASS/AP

Stefon Diggs gives the Commanders and quarterback Jayden Daniels a versatile receiving option.

"He's a tremendous player," Coach Dan Quinn said. "From what I've heard, more and more, this week is about what kind of leader he's been to younger players on the teams that he's been a part of and the energy he brings, not just to the field but also to the sidelines."

Assuming health, the potential downside with Diggs is his history of off-the-field problems. He has had multiple legal issues and a criminal case within the past year. In December, he was accused of assault and battery by his former chef, Jamila Adams.

While Diggs was found not guilty of all charges in May, he's also facing lawsuits from former girlfriend Mulan Hernandez and former associate Christopher Griffith. When contacted by The Washington Post on Friday, an NFL spokesman confirmed the league isn't investigating Diggs for potential discipline

The Commanders have recently shown a low tolerance for off-the-field problems for individuals within the franchise. Just before the start of training camp last month, they fired tight ends coach Ben Steele following an arrest for DWI in June. Quinn and General Manager Adam Peters have stressed the importance of character, and those same standards will be applied to Diggs, they say.

"For Stef or any of the guys, we've got a really good process that we go through when we bring players in," Quinn said. "So, we were certainly comfortable with that process, and we're excited to have him."

Diggs was limited in practice Friday as he starts learning offensive coordinator David Blough's scheme and working himself into football shape. As he gets more comfortable, he will get more opportunities to put what he can do on display. He made clear that his expectations for himself are high.

"In this profession, in this job, you've got to exude confidence," Diggs said. "My numbers have always spoken for themselves. No matter who you like or what you say, the production has been there. … I say that humbly. I say that from the space of I've worked extremely hard and I've always been productive. … If it was easy, everybody would be doing it."

Observations and updates

• Cornerback Trey Amos and defensive end Dorance Armstrong were activated from the physically unable to perform list Friday and practiced for the first time during training camp.

Amos suffered a season-ending broken fibula in Week 10 of his rookie season. Although the fracture healed properly, he was held out for the start of camp because of soft tissue soreness.

During team periods, Amos was working with the first-team defense. Amik Robertson was starting at the other outside corner spot across from him. At times, Mike Sainristil rotated in for Robertson.

Armstrong went down with a torn ACL in Week 7 last season. Given he's only about 10 months post-injury, it's no surprise that he's still working his way back into form. He will be limited to individual drills in practice for the time being.

"I feel like patience was the biggest thing and keeping my mental strong," Armstrong said. "There were days where I felt like I was good and where I thought I was ready to go a while ago, and I got results that showed that I wasn't, but I still had to continue to push to get to where I am today."

• Punter Tress Way was activated from the nonfootball injury list Friday and returned to practice. He suffered a pectoral injury during the offseason while away from the team.

• Center Nick Allegretti (calf), tight end John Bates (hamstring), defensive end Drake Jackson (illness) and defensive end Deatrich Wise (quad) didn't practice Friday. To make room for Diggs, Washington released guard Tyler Cooper.

• The Commanders signed offensive lineman Max Scharping, according to a person familiar with the situation. Scharping has been a reliable backup for the Pittsburgh Steelers, Cincinnati Bengals and Houston Texans, though he missed last season with a torn ACL. He has spent most of his career at left and right guard, but he also has some experience at center, where the Commanders are thin.

BASEBALL

National League

EAST	W	L	PCT	GB	L10	STR
x-Atlanta	70	45	.609	—	8-2	W-8
x-Philadelphia	62	54	.534	8½	5-5	W-1
Miami	58	59	.496	13	5-5	L-4
Washington	57	61	.483	14½	2-8	W-1
New York	51	66	.436	20	6-4	W-4

CENTRAL	W	L	PCT	GB	L10	STR
Milwaukee	72	44	.621	—	6-4	L-1
Chicago	68	49	.581	4½	7-3	W-5
St. Louis	58	58	.500	14	5-5	W-2
Cincinnati	56	59	.487	15½	7-3	L-1
Pittsburgh	57	61	.483	16	2-8	L-4

WEST	W	L	PCT	GB	L10	STR
x-Los Angeles	69	46	.600	—	2-8	L-6
x-Arizona	61	55	.526	8½	6-4	L-1
x-San Diego	60	56	.517	9½	7-3	W-1
x-San Francisco	48	67	.417	21	4-6	L-2
Colorado	45	71	.388	24½	3-7	L-4

x-Late game

American League

EAST	W	L	PCT	GB	L10	STR
x-Tampa Bay	68	46	.596	—	7-3	W-3
Boston	64	51	.557	4½	9-1	W-9
x-New York	64	51	.557	4½	5-5	L-1
Baltimore	56	60	.483	13	5-5	L-2
x-Toronto	54	62	.466	15	6-4	L-1

CENTRAL	W	L	PCT	GB	L10	STR
Chicago	59	56	.513	—	4-6	L-4
Cleveland	58	59	.496	2	4-6	W-1
Minnesota	58	59	.496	2	5-5	W-2
x-Detroit	56	59	.487	3	6-4	W-1
Kansas City	48	69	.410	12	3-7	L-2

WEST	W	L	PCT	GB	L10	STR
x-Houston	59	57	.509	—	7-3	L-1
Texas	58	58	.500	1	4-6	W-3
x-Seattle	56	60	.483	3	4-6	L-1
Athletics	45	71	.388	14	1-9	L-9
Los Angeles	45	71	.388	14	3-7	W-2

x-Late game

Nationals 5, Reds 3

REDS	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	AVG
De La Cruz ss	2	1	1	1	2	0	.277
Stewart 1b	4	0	0	0	0	1	.255
Bleday lf	3	0	0	0	1	1	.228
Stephenson c	4	0	0	0	0	1	.248
Suárez dh	4	1	1	1	0	2	.203
Rodríguez cf	4	0	1	0	0	0	.111
Marte rf	4	0	1	0	0	2	.198
Hayes 3b	3	0	1	0	0	1	.143
I.Johnson ph	1	0	0	0	0	1	.091
McLain 2b	3	1	2	1	0	1	.195
TOTALS	32	3	7	3	3	10	—

NATIONALS	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	AVG
Abrams dh	4	1	1	0	0	1	.287
Ortiz 1b	3	0	0	0	1	2	.200
House 3b	4	1	1	0	0	1	.229
Lile lf	4	2	2	3	0	2	.244
Crews rf	4	0	0	0	0	2	.217
Ford c	3	1	1	2	0	1	.200
Nuñez ss	3	0	0	0	0	0	.231
Tena 2b	2	0	1	0	1	0	.238
Vivas 2b	0	0	0	0	0	0	.236
Young cf	3	0	1	0	0	1	.243
TOTALS	30	5	7	5	2	10	—

CINCINNATI	012	000	000	—	3	7	1
WASHINGTON	300	200	00X	—	5	7	0

E: De La Cruz (12). **LOB:** Cincinnati 5, Washington 3. **2B:** Rodríguez (1), McLain (15), Lile (23). **HR:** Suárez (15), off Cavalli; McLain (10), off Cavalli; De La Cruz (20), off Cavalli; Lile (15), off Petty; Ford (2), off Garcia. **RBI:** Suárez (41), McLain (28), De La Cruz (54), Lile 3 (59), Ford 2 (6). **SB:** Marte (7). **CS:** Tena (2).

REDS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Petty	1⅓	2	3	2	1	1	38	4.83
Garcia	2⅓	2	2	2	0	3	39	2.74
Mey	2⅓	2	0	0	0	4	37	5.56
McCambley	1⅓	1	0	0	1	2	29	4.70

NATIONALS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Cavalli	6	7	3	3	2	8	100	3.57
Cruz	1	0	0	0	1	1	13	2.70
Ribalta	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	3.34
Beeter	1	0	0	0	0	1	8	3.86

WP: Cavalli (9-5); **LP:** Garcia (2-3); **S:** Beeter (12). **Inherited runners-scored:** Garcia 1-0, McCambley 1-0, Cruz 2-0. **WP:** McCambley. ABS Challenge_Nuñez (Strike-Confirmed). **T:** 2:38. **A:** 26,065 (41,376).

HOW THEY SCORED

NATIONALS FIRST
CJ Abrams singles. Abimelec Ortiz flies out. Brady House hits into a force out. CJ Abrams to third. Fielding error by Elly De La Cruz. **Daylen Lile homers, Brady House scores, CJ Abrams scores.** Dylan Crews strikes out swinging. Harry Ford grounds out.
Nationals 3, Reds 0
REDS SECOND
Tyler Stephenson grounds out. **Eugenio Suarez homers.** Hector Rodriguez grounds out. Noelvi Marte strikes out swinging.
Nationals 3, Reds 1
REDS THIRD
Ke'Bryan Hayes flies out. **Matt McLain homers. Elly De La Cruz homers.** Sal Stewart called out on strikes. JJ Bleday strikes out swinging.
Reds 3, Nationals 3
NATIONALS FOURTH
Daylen Lile doubles. Dylan Crews strikes out swinging. **Harry Ford homers, Daylen Lile scores.** Nasim Nunez grounds out. Jose Tena grounds out.
Nationals 5, Reds 3

NATIONALS' LEADERS

Entering Friday's game

BATTERS	AVG	OBA	H	HR	RBI	BB	SO
Pinckney	.500	.500	1	1	1	0	0
Abrams	.287	.362	122	28	88	42	110
Wiemer	.286	.398	20	3	12	12	29
García	.283	.313	101	23	76	16	61
Ruiz	.270	.307	66	7	38	12	31
Wood	.265	.393	116	30	73	90	153
Mead	.254	.352	72	17	48	39	62
Ortiz	.250	.250	3	1	1	0	2
Lile	.242	.294	106	14	56	28	89
Young	.242	.310	75	9	39	25	60
Vivas	.236	.324	49	3	18	25	34
Tena	.235	.304	48	5	20	18	66
Nuñez	.233	.317	77	1	33	41	79
House	.228	.282	45	8	27	14	62
Crews	.221	.300	53	9	25	20	62
Chaparro	.213	.333	20	6	23	14	26
Ford	.188	.333	6	1	4	6	9
Millas	.185	.277	24	2	11	14	37

PITCHERS	ERA	IP	H	ER	BB	SO
Williams	0.00	6	5	0	2	9
Dion	0.00	0.2	0	0	1	0
Yean	1.80	10	5	2	2	6
Fernández	2.25	4	3	1	2	3
Poulin	2.70	36.2	27	11	21	25
Cosgrove	3.00	9	7	3	3	5
Griffin	3.06	129.1	109	44	30	116
Ribalta	3.44	34	28	13	13	32
Cavalli	3.52	122.2	121	48	37	133
Lord	3.81	59	50	25	21	52
Lovelady	3.91	23	26	10	17	21
Alvarez	3.94	64	62	28	31	63
Beeter	3.97	34	22	15	22	35
Lawrence	4.26	6.1	7	3	7	6
Littell	4.97	112.1	115	62	35	70
Irvin	5.37	62	54	37	26	62
Cornelio	5.40	20	17	12	20	20
Mikolas	5.89	113	136	74	23	56
Pérez	6.19	16	16	11	11	9
Schultz	6.40	32.1	43	23	12	32
Parker	6.58	39.2	46	29	13	34
Kent	6.75	10.2	14	8	2	9
Waldichuk	6.75	9.1	8	7	6	8
Varland	6.82	31.2	43	24	15	30
Palmquist	7.71	16.1	21	14	8	15
Krook	7.71	4.2	4	4	6	4
Henry	7.90	13.2	17	12	7	15
Kranick	8.22	7.2	10	7	4	3
Granillo	9.64	9.1	13	10	8	3
Vivas	16.88	2.2	8	5	1	0
Wiemer	22.50	2	7	5	2	0
Cruz	27.00	0.1	2	1	1	1
Rutledge	47.25	1.1	6	7	2	2

NL leaders

Entering Friday's games.

BATTING

Arraez, Phi	.326
Lopez, Mia	.318
Freeman, LA	.310
Gonzales, Pit	.309

HOME RUNS

Goodman, Col	33
Schwarber, Phi	33
Olson, Atl	32
Wood, Was	30
Abrams, Was	28

ERA

Misiorowski, Mil	1.630
Sale, Atl	2.077
Burns, Cin	2.351
Sánchez, Phi	2.646
Rodriguez, Ari	2.707
Yamamoto, LA	2.761

STRIKEOUTS

Misiorowski, Mil	195
Sánchez, Phi	174
Luzardo, Phi	164
Skenes, Pit	162

AL leaders

Entering Friday's games.

BATTING

Alvarez, Hou	.329
Díaz, TB	.300
Simpson, TB	.299
Jung, Tex	.294
Contreras, Bos	.288

HOME RUNS

Alvarez, Hou	35
Caminero, TB	33
Rice, NY	31
Dingler, Det	26
2 tied	25

ERA

Schlittler, NY	2.255
Cease, Tor	2.280
Messick, Cle	2.568
Martinez, TB	2.651
Gray, Bos	2.783

STRIKEOUTS

Cease, Tor	184
Williams, Cle	178
Schlittler, NY	171
Detmers, LA	150

RICH STORRY/GETTY IMAGES

Close call

Angels outfielder Mike Trout, right, avoided disaster by catching a flyball against the Marlins during the first inning of Los Angeles' 4-3 victory in Miami.

Angels 4, Marlins 3

Mike Trout and Nolan Schanuel both hit home runs for Los Angeles in a win over Miami.

Trout, who turned 35 on Friday, homered on his birthday for the sixth time.

ANGELS	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	AVG
Meckler lf-rf	5	0	0	0	0	0	.301
Trout cf	3	2	1	1	1	1	.240
Schanuel 1b	3	1	1	2	1	0	.273
Neto ss	4	0	0	0	0	2	.228
Grissom 3b	4	0	0	0	0	2	.253
Guzman 3b	0	0	0	0	0	0	.231
Ballesteros dh	3	0	1	0	1	1	.229
Peraza 2b	4	0	1	0	0	2	.233
Lowe rf	2	1	1	0	1	0	.204
Siri ph-lf	1	0	0	0	0	1	.265
Heineman c	3	0	1	0	0	0	.176
TOTALS	32	4	6	3	4	9	—

MARLINS	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	AVG
Stowers 1b	4	0	4	2	1	0	.241
Lopez ss	5	0	0	0	0	0	.315
Conine dh	3	0	0	0	0	2	.252
Ramírez ph-dh	2	1	2	0	0	0	.240
Edwards 2b	5	0	0	0	0	0	.285
Caissie rf	2	1	0	0	1	1	.226
Hernández ph-lf	2	0	0	0	0	0	.227
Jiménez 3b	5	0	2	1	0	2	.216
Marsee cf	2	1	2	0	1	0	.203
Sanoja ph-rf	2	0	1	0	0	0	.271
Mack c	4	0	0	0	0	1	.235
Ruiz lf-cf	2	0	1	0	0	2	.262
TOTALS	38	3	12	3	5	6	—

L.A.	100	000	300	—	4	6	0
MIAMI	000	101	001	—	3	12	1

E: Ekness (1). **LOB:** Los Angeles 6, Miami 13. **2B:** Ruiz (10), Sanoja (24). **HR:** Trout (19), off Phillips; Schanuel (7), off Ekness.

ANGELS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	ERA
Klassen	4	4	1	1	4	3	7.27
Saucedo	1⅓	1	1	1	0	2	4.76
Anderson	⅓	1	0	0	1	0	5.21
Weiman	1	2	0	0	0	0	0.00
Joyce	1	1	0	0	0	1	0.00
Fermin	1	3	1	1	0	0	3.29

MARLINS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	ERA
Phillips	4	5	1	1	1	4	3.47
Petersen	1⅓	0	0	0	2	2	3.04
Ekness	1⅓	1	3	0	1	0	1.12
Faucher	1	0	0	0	0	2	4.44
King	1	0	0	0	0	1	3.06

WP: Anderson (2-0); **LP:** Ekness (0-1); **S:** Fermin (1). **Inherited runners-scored:** Anderson 1-1, Petersen 1-0, Ekness 1-0. ABS Challenge_Phillips (Ball-Overturned to Strike) **T:** 2:58. **A:** 16,506 (37,446).

Padres 5, D'backs 1

Late Thursday

Jackson Merrill and Ty France each had two hits and an RBI, four relievers combined for five scoreless innings, and San Diego beat Arizona to improve their position in the National League playoff race.

The division rivals split the four-game series.

PADRES	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	AVG
Tatis rf	4	2	1	0	1	0	.280
Rengifo lf	5	0	3	0	0	0	.241
Machado 3b	4	1	0	1	1	1	.210
France 1b	4	0	2	1	0	1	.291
Merrill cf	5	1	2	1	0	1	.241
Bogaerts ss	3	0	2	0	1	0	.227
Sheets dh	4	0	0	0	0	1	.212
Fermin c	4	0	1	1	0	0	.187
Cronenworth 2b	3	1	1	0	0	0	.218
TOTALS	36	5	12	4	3	4	—

D'BACKS	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	AVG
Perdomo ss	4	0	0	0	0	3	.242
Carroll rf	4	1	1	0	0	1	.245
Moreno c	4	0	3	1	0	0	.302
Marte 2b	3	0	1	0	1	1	.248
Nootbaar dh	4	0	1	0	0	1	.232
Arenado 3b	4	0	0	0	0	1	.241
Kepler lf	4	0	1	0	0	0	.220
Tawa 1b	4	0	1	0	0	3	.232
Waldschmidt cf	3	0	0	0	0	0	.293
TOTALS	34	1	8	1	1	10	—

SAN DIEGO	102	001	100	—	5	12	0
ARIZONA	001	000	000	—	1	8	0

LOB: San Diego 9, Arizona 7. **2B:** Tatis (24), France 2 (15), Cronenworth (6), Moreno (19), Carroll (23).

PADRES	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	ERA
Buehler	4	6	1	1	1	3	5.07
B.Rodriguez	2	0	0	0	0	1	2.29
Estrada	1	0	0	0	0	1	3.65
Morejon	1	1	0	0	0	3	2.95
Miller	1	1	0	0	0	2	0.74

D'BACKS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	ERA
Drake	3⅔	6	3	3	1	1	5.40
Loáisiga	1⅓	0	0	0	0	2	2.72
Abner	3	4	2	2	2	1	6.57
Morillo	1	2	0	0	0	0	2.49

WP: B.Rodriguez (3-2); **LP:** Drake (0-1). **Inherited runners-scored:** Loáisiga 2-0. **HBP:** Drake (Cronenworth). **WP:** Abner. ABS Challenge_Machado (Strike-Overturned to Ball) **T:** 2:47. **A:** 21,884 (48,359).

Red Sox 13, Athletics 1

Payton Tolle struck out a career-high 14, Wilyer Abreu drove in three runs, and Boston won its ninth game in a row.

The Red Sox are just the seventh team since 1920 to win 27 or more in a 30-game span.

ATHLETICS	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	AVG
Bolte cf	4	0	0	0	0	3	.254
Wilson ss	3	0	0	0	0	2	.268
Williams ss	1	0	0	0	0	0	.252
Heim c	3	0	0	0	0	2	.226
Soderstrom lf	3	1	1	1	0	1	.245
Cortes lf-p	0	0	0	0	0	0	.260
T.White 1b	3	0	0	0	0	2	.267
Serven dh	3	0	0	0	0	3	.211
Walton 2b	0	0	0	0	0	0	.281
Butler rf	3	0	0	0	0	0	.207
Muncy 3b	3	0	1	0	0	1	.222
Ornelas 2b-lf	3	0	0	0	0	2	.182
TOTALS	29	1	2	1	0	16	—

RED SOX	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	AVG
Sogard 1b	4	2	1	0	1	2	.242
Rafaela cf	5	2	2	1	0	0	.289
Abreu rf	2	1	2	3	1	0	.256
E.White rf	2	1	0	0	0	0	.228
Durbin 3b	4	0	1	2	0	0	.251
Yoshida dh	4	1	2	2	0	0	.273
Monasterio ss	4	1	2	1	1	0	.272
Duran lf	4	1	1	2	1	1	.204
Seigler 2b	5	1	2	0	0	1	.246
Rogers c	3	3	2	1	1	1	.178
TOTALS	37	13	15	12	5	5	—

ATHLETICS	000	010	000	—	1	2	2
BOSTON	050	402	20X	—	13	15	0

E: Juenger (), Ornelas (1). **LOB:** Athletics 1, Boston 7. **2B:** Seigler (11), Rogers 2 (4), Abreu (23), Yoshida (14), Durbin (22). **HR:** Soderstrom (18), off Tolle; Duran (16), off Perkins.

ATHLETICS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	ERA
Perkins	3	5	5	5	3	3	7.04
Juenger	1	5	4	4	0	0	7.15
Medina	1	1	0	0	0	2	3.83
Blewett	1⅓	3	4	2	2	0	3.00
J.Suarez	⅓	1	0	0	0	0	4.63
Cortes	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.00

RED SOX	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	ERA
Tolle	6	2	1	1	0	14	3.20
Burgos	3	0	0	0	0	2	0.00

WP: Tolle (7-6); **LP:** Perkins (2-8); **S:** Burgos (1). **Inherited runners-scored:** J.Suarez 1-1. ABS Challenge_Duran (Strike-Overturned to Ball) **T:** 2:34. **A:** 37,227 (37,755).

Mets 6, Pirates 4

Marcus Semien hit a three-run homer, rookie Zac Thornton pitched five scoreless innings, and New York matched a season high with its fourth straight win by beating Pittsburgh.

Semien's 14th homer of the season capped a four-run third that put the Mets ahead 5-0.

METS	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	AVG
Ewing cf	4	2	3	0	0	1	.269
Lindor ss	3	1	1	1	2	2	.232
Bichette 3b	5	0	1	0	0	0	.256
Benge lf	2	1	2	2	0	0	.270
Pache lf	2	0	0	0	0	2	.000
Young 1b	4	1	1	0	0	0	.253
Semien 2b	4	1	1	3	0	0	.215
Baty rf	4	0	1	0	0	1	.220
Polanco dh	4	0	0	0	0	1	.139
Torrens c	3	0	0	0	0	1	.231
TOTALS	35	6	10	6	3	7	—

PIRATES	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	AVG
Mangum cf	3	1	0	1	1	1	.295
Lowe 2b	5	0	1	1	0	1	.254
Reynolds lf	5	0	2	0	0	1	.267
Valdez rf	2	0	0	0	2	0	.245
Horwitz 1b	4	0	1	0	0	0	.271
Gonzales 3b	4	1	2	0	0	0	.311
Simon dh	4	2	2	0	0	0	.222
Triolo ss	3	0	2	1	0	0	.245
Rodríguez ph	1	0	0	0	0	0	.267
Flores c	2	0	1	0	1	1	.227
Gonzalez ph	1	0	1	1	0	0	.237
TOTALS	34	4	12	4	4	4	—

NEW YORK	104	100	000	—	6	10	0
PITTSBURGH	000	000	202	—	4	12	0

LOB: New York 6, Pittsburgh 8. **2B:** Ewing (15), Reynolds (27), Gonzales (19). **HR:** Semien (14), off Mlodzinski.

METS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	ERA
Thornton	5	4	0	0	2	3	2.52
Núñez	1	3	2	2	0	0	9.00
Yan	1	1	0	0	1	0	0.00
Duarte	1	1	0	0	0	1	1.17
Williams	1	3	2	2	1	0	4.66

PIRATES	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	ERA
Mlodzinski	3	7	5	5	1	1	3.51
Sisk	1⅓	1	1	1	0	2	2.31
Ramírez	3⅓	1	0	0	1	4	2.80
Weaver	1	1	0	0	1	0	1.80

WP: Thornton (3-2); **LP:** Mlodzinski (6-4). **Inherited runners-scored:** Yan 2-2. **HBP:** Sisk (Ewing). **WP:** Thornton. ABS Challenge_Ramírez (Ball-Confirmed) **T:** 2:53. **A:** 33,497 (38,753).

Guardians 8, White Sox 2

Angel Martínez hit a grand slam and drove in a career-high six runs, and Cleveland beat American League Central-leading Chicago to end a three-game losing streak.

Steven Kwan added a solo home run for the Guardians.

GUARDIANS	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	AVG
Kwan cf-lf	5	2	3	1	0	0	.264
DeLauter dh	5	1	2	0	0	1	.280
Ramírez 3b	4	2	1	0	1	0	.234
Adell rf	3	1	0	0	0	2	.236
Halpin cf	0	0	0	0	0	0	.219
Martínez lf-rf	5	1	2	6	0	1	.231
Hoskins 1b	4	1	1	0	0	2	.177
Rocchio ss	4	0	0	0	0	0	.254
Hedges c	3	0	1	1	1	0	.273
Genao 2b	4	0	0	0	0	0	.385
TOTALS	37	8	10	8	2	6	—

WHITE SOX	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	AVG
Meidroth 2b	5	0	1	0	0	2	.274
Murakami dh	4	1	1	1	0	2	.236
Vargas 1b	3	0	0	0	1	1	.234
Grichuk lf	3	0	1	0	0	1	.262
Antonacci ph-lf	1	0	0	0	0	0	.277
C.Montgomery 3b	4	0	0	0	0	3	.214
Doyle cf	4	0	0	0	0	1	.214
B.Montgomery rf	3	1	2	1	1	1	.236
Quero c	4	0	1	0	0	0	.195
Acuña ss	4	0	2	0	0	1	.249
TOTALS	35	2	8	2	2	12	—

CLEVELAND	200	051	000	—	8	10	0
CHICAGO	010	001	000	—	2	8	0

LOB: Cleveland 6, Chicago 8. **2B:** Meidroth (21). **HR:** Martínez (12), off Sandlin; Kwan (2), off Sandlin; B.Montgomery (4), off Messick; Murakami (25), off Messick.

GUARDIANS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	ERA
Messick	7	4	2	2	1	8	2.57
Aleman	2	4	0	0	1	4	3.31

WHITE SOX	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	ERA
Schultz	⅓	3	2	2	0	1	6.06
Sandlin	5⅓	7	6	6	2	4	6.93
Richards	2⅓	0	0	0	0	0	3.31
Fedde	1	0	0	0	0	1	4.30

WP: Messick (9-6); **LP:** Schultz (3-9). **Inherited runners-scored:** Sandlin 2-0, Richards 1-0. **HBP:** Schultz (Adell), Sandlin (Adell). **WP:** Sandlin. ABS Challenge_Vargas (Strike-Confirmed) **T:** 2:33.

Braves 11, Marlins 3

Late Thursday

Ronald Acuña Jr. hit two home runs, and Matt Olson added a blast as Atlanta routed Miami to complete a three-game sweep.

MARLINS	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	AVG
Lopez ss	5	0	1	0	0	0	.318
Hernández lf	5	0	0	0	0	3	.229
Ramírez dh	3	0	1	0	1	1	.227
Marsee cf	0	0	0	0	0	0	.199
Edwards 2b	2	1	1	0	2	0	.288
Jiménez 3b	3	1	1	0	1	0	.209
Stowers 1b	4	1	1	0	0	1	.232
Sanoja rf-cf-p	4	0	2	2	0	0	.269
Ruiz cf	1	0	0	0	0	1	.258
Conine ph-rf	3	0	1	1	0	1	.257
Navarreto c	3	0	0	0	0	1	.118
TOTALS	33	3	8	3	4	8	—

BRAVES	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	AVG
Baldwin c	5	1	1	0	0	0	.271
Acuña rf	5	2	2	3	0	0	.244
Olson 1b	3	3	2	1	2	0

GEOFF BURKE/IMAGN IMAGES

Nationals left fielder Daylen Lile hit a three-run home run in the first inning to help lead Washington to a win against the Reds on Friday.

Nats get back on track with home win vs. Cincinnati

NATIONALS FROM B7

to the plate as much as possible." He registered one hit, a single to kick off the first, and Ford's homer did the rest of the damage.

The duo of youngsters, Lile and Ford — though anyone on the Nationals, really, fits that bill — embraced on the field as the game concluded. It had been a long week.

Since Washington last took the field at Nationals Park last Wednesday, it traded away its starting first baseman and its staff ace. The primary return was pitchers, lots and lots of pitchers, a number of which were arms to add to a historically shaky bullpen. Why?

A circadian rhythm has developed in Navy Yard this season. Washington's starter would manage through roughly six innings, allowing limited damage. And then the bullpen gates would fling open, and parents would cover their children's eyes. No need to sour a prospective baseball fan with the Nationals' relief arms.

Friday had all the makings of another nightmare on the Anacostia. Righty Cade Cavalli took the mound, riding a 3.52 ERA with five straight quality starts. Confidence was high. "We've leaned on him a multitude of times this year when we've needed somebody to pick us up," Butera said. "And he's done that."

Cavalli allowed solo homers to Elly De La Cruz, Eugenio Suárez and Matt McLain in the second and third. But he found a rhythm, striking out eight Reds, and after the final out of the sixth, he wandered to the dugout with a two-run lead and only three innings left for his replacements.

From there, as atypical as it's been, Yovanny Cruz, Orlando Ribalta and Clayton Beeter made it the rest of the way without allowing any further damage.

In a way, Friday night served as a good barometer. After a gruesome week against the National League East's finest, one in which a sparkling season of hope entered a somewhat inevitable rain delay, a game against another club in the wild-card fight helped gauge what was actually left of these Nationals.

If the result was any indication, Washington is still very much in playoff contention.

"We're in this thing. We're still trying to get a playoff spot. Like we're not, we're not mailing this thing in," Butera said. "We got to play our best baseball right now. We got to play our best baseball every single day the rest of the way."

Notes: The Nationals requested unconditional release waivers for pitcher Zack Littell on Friday afternoon, opening the gates for his departure from the club. The move comes two days after he was designated for assignment following a four-run start against the Philadelphia Phillies.

Before this week, Littell appeared to be making some progress: He has allowed two runs or fewer in six of his past eight appearances. Yet his ERA was at 4.97 after Tuesday's rough outing.

NATIONALS ON DECK

vs. Cincinnati Reds

Saturday	6:45	Nationals.TV
Sunday	12:15	NBCSN/ Peacock

vs. Chicago Cubs

Tuesday	6:45	Nationals.TV
Wednesday	6:45	WTTG (Ch. 5), Nationals.TV
Thursday	4:05	Nationals.TV

at New York Mets

Friday	7:10	Nationals.TV
Aug. 15	4:10	Nationals.TV
Aug. 16	1:40	Nationals.TV

Radio: WJFK (106.7 FM), WDCN (87.7 FM)

Mystics hold off Dream for sixth consecutive win

MYSTICS FROM B7

bration than the last.

McMahon followed a pull-up jumper with hit a three from a couple of feet beyond the arc before finishing her quarter with a driving layup with just seven seconds left. She finished the game with 11 points, while fellow rookie Cassandre Prosper had a career-high 10.

"We're just finding different ways. Understanding the game, understanding each other, the chemistry that we have," Johnson said. "I'll just keep going back to our player development, where individually they're able to get better, and so then it allows us to get better as a team. And then, we can put an effort like this evening together."

The intimate confines of CareFirst Arena reflect the Mystics' energy back to them from every corner.

At other times this year, and certainly in previous seasons while attempting to rebuild, Washington's stretches of success were often considered the beginners' luck-style runs that can come from a team that doesn't know it isn't supposed to be any good.

These wins, now, are more emblematic of a team that knows exactly what it's doing. There will undoubtedly be difficult stretches to come before the end of the season, as expected for any team and particularly one as young as the Mystics.

But Washington isn't, at this point in the year, winning games through naive confidence and ignorance of the challenge. Stacking up six wins in a row while playing some of the top teams in the WNBA doesn't seem like the work of a fluky, inexperienced group.

In the fourth quarter, after Rhyne Howard hit a three-pointer to cut the Dream's deficit lead to seven, a timeout by Washington presented a key moment.

The Mystics responded with a driving layup from Austin, and after a missed three from Jordin Canada at the other end, floor, another bucket from Austin made it an 11-point game.

The final seconds brought another test of the Mystics' mettle, but thanks to Austin, the team passed again, and a sixth straight victory was in the books.

"Finding different ways to win is a mark of an ascending team. An ascending, growing team," Johnson said. "It's very clear."

MYSTICS' NEXT THREE

vs. Phoenix Mercury

Sunday	3	Monumental

at Las Vegas Aces

Tuesday	10	Monumental

at Las Vegas Aces

Thursday	10	Prime Video

Radio: WTEM (980 AM)

BRAD MILLS/IMAGN IMAGES

Shakira Austin, right, tied a career high with five blocks, while the Mystics had a team-record 12. "We're just athletic," Austin said.

PERSPECTIVE

Jordan's time in D.C. offers cautionary tale for James

SIELSKI FROM B7

superstardom — the kind that only the chosen few, Jordan and James among them, enjoy — and its lessons apply just as well to the 76ers and Philadelphia as they did to the Wizards and Washington. Here are five important ones:

Lesson 1: The Wizards' leadership kowtowed to Jordan. The 76ers' leadership can acquiesce to James only so much.

One of the recurring themes of "When Nothing Else Matters" is the control Jordan exerted over the Wizards' entire organization, starting with his friend and hand-picked coach, Doug Collins.

"Whenever an issue critical to the team's well-being arose," Leahy wrote, "Jordan bent Collins to his will — whether it was over Jordan's playing time, or who among his teammates deserved to start or not start, or what kind of offense or defense to deploy. Collins's lack of power illustrated the dangers in allowing any team's Zeus to rule over a coach and franchise."

Bob Myers has gravitas and four championship rings from his years with the Golden State Warriors. Mike Gansey has a good relationship with James from their time together with the Cleveland Cavaliers. Nick Nurse won a championship in 2019 with the Toronto Raptors — and with a superstar, Kawhi Leonard, who can be a challenge to manage. They have to assert and maintain their authority, or at least some semblance of it, in the face of James's esteem and power. He won't necessarily be as controlling and demanding as Jordan, but he can be controlling and demanding enough. He's accustomed to getting his way all the time, and it would be a lot to expect him to be just along for the ride now.

LISA BLUMENFELD/GETTY IMAGES

Michael Jordan came out of retirement to play for the Wizards, leading Washington to a 74-90 record over those two seasons.

Lesson 2: Expect tension among the players, especially the best ones.

Jordan's verbal abuse of rookie Kwame Brown, including calling him a homophobic slur during practice, was among the salacious revelations in Leahy's book. But Jordan's relationship with Richard "Rip" Hamilton throughout the 2001-02 season is the more relevant one for the 2026-27 76ers. "There was a lingering tension" between Jordan and Hamilton all season, according to Leahy, in part because Hamilton — who was in his third season and just emerging as one of the league's better perimeter scorers — believed that it was time for him to assert himself as the team's centerpiece and that Jordan was holding him back.

Just because Jordan and Hamilton clashed doesn't mean James, Joel Embiid, Jaylen Brown, Tyrese Maxey and VJ Edgecombe won't get along. But the 76ers have to prepare for the possibility, even the likelihood, that this team won't be a smooth-running, ego-free machine. Brown is 27, was the MVP of the 2024 NBA Finals and — despite the debate around whether he is an analytically efficient player — is regarded as a star. Embiid is a former league MVP. Maxey is approaching his peak years, as is Edgecombe. And James, like Jordan, hasn't deferred often to anyone in his career.

Lesson 3: Time will take its toll on an older player, even one as great as Jordan or James.

Jordan, remarkably, played all 82 games in his final NBA season, but he struggled with tendinitis throughout 2001-02, missing 22 games. James hasn't appeared in more than 71 games in any of his last eight seasons, and in five of those seasons, he played 60 games or fewer. Never forget: Father Time is Rocky Marciano.

Lesson 4: The honeymoon will end, and victories had better follow.

Jordan's two years in Washington are not remembered as a great and glorious portion of his career, for the simple reason that the Wizards still stunk with him. The 76ers aren't likely to fall on their faces with James. But the pressure on them will be immense, and patience with a losing streak or a stretch of subpar play will be thin, if any patience exists at all.

"Sports fans can be a cruel, monomaniacal breed," Leahy wrote. "Only games and standings matter to the most rabid, which, depending upon how you want to look at it, evinces either an endearing, childlike intensity or a severe case of arrested development."

Lesson 5: There was more to Jordan's comeback — and more to James's joining the 76ers — than winning.

"The truth was this: A sporting god enjoys supreme power only as long as he plays, earns and fills seats," Leahy wrote. "The moment he ceases to be a team's principal revenue stream is the moment his dominion ends."

James said that he considered retiring, that he changed his mind because he still wants "to work … to grind … to compete," that his desire to win another championship was the reason he came here. Here's a safe bet: It wasn't the only one. He will fill more seats in Philadelphia than he might have anywhere else, and you're naive to think that intoxicating sensation wasn't on his mind when he made this decision.

LeBron James is as much a sporting god as Michael Jordan was, and to be treated as such is the most powerful drug on earth. He doesn't want to exit the stage as anything less.

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SCOREBOARD

PRO FOOTBALL

NFL preseason

THURSDAY'S RESULT
HALL OF FAME GAME — IN CANTON, OHIO
Carolina 33, Arizona 30

WEEK 1
THURSDAY'S GAMES
Detroit at Cincinnati, 7
Green Bay at Pittsburgh, 7
Indianapolis at New England, 7:30
L.A. Chargers at Houston, 8
Arizona at Las Vegas, 8
Tennessee at San Francisco, 9
FRIDAY'S GAMES
Miami at Washington, 7
Tampa Bay at N.Y. Jets, 7
Denver at Atlanta, 7
SATURDAY, AUG. 15
Philadelphia at Baltimore, 7
Minnesota at N.Y. Giants, 1
Carolina at Buffalo, 1
Cleveland at Chicago, 1
Jacksonville at New Orleans, 4
L.A. Rams at Kansas City, 4
Dallas at Seattle, 8

WEEK 2
THURSDAY, AUG. 20
Las Vegas at Houston, 8
San Francisco at L.A. Chargers, 10
FRIDAY, AUG. 21
N.Y. Jets at Pittsburgh, 7
Carolina at Jacksonville, 7:30
Green Bay at Denver, 9
SATURDAY, AUG. 22
Washington at Detroit, noon
Baltimore at Minnesota, 1
Buffalo at Cleveland, 1
Atlanta at Indianapolis, 1
N.Y. Giants at Miami, 4
New Orleans at L.A. Rams, 4
Chicago at Cincinnati, 7
Philadelphia at New England, 7
Kansas City at Tampa Bay, 7:30
Dallas at Arizona, 10
SUNDAY, AUG. 23
Seattle at Tennessee, 8

WEEK 3
THURSDAY, AUG. 27
Pittsburgh at Buffalo, 7
New England at Cleveland, 8
San Francisco at Las Vegas, 8
L.A. Rams at L.A. Chargers, 10
FRIDAY, AUG. 28
Washington at Baltimore, 6
Atlanta at Miami, 7
Houston at Carolina, 7
N.Y. Giants at N.Y. Jets, 7:30
Tampa Bay at Jacksonville, 7:30
Cincinnati at Philadelphia, 8
Seattle at Kansas City, 8
New Orleans at Dallas, 8
Arizona at Green Bay, 8
Minnesota at Denver, 9
SATURDAY, AUG. 29
Detroit at Indianapolis, 1
Chicago at Tennessee, 6

AUTO RACING

NASCAR Cup Series

POINTS LEADERS
Through Monday.
1. Denny Hamlin, 886.
2. Tyler Reddick, 802.
3. Ryan Blaney, 766.
4. Ty Gibbs, 751.
5. Carson Hocevar, 638.
6. Chase Elliott, 635.
7. Chase Briscoe, 623.
8. Kyle Larson, 617.
9. Chris Buescher, 613.
10. Christopher Bell, 609.
11. Daniel Suárez, 583.
12. William Byron, 568.
13. Joey Logano, 545.
14. Bubba Wallace, 540.
15. Shane Van Gisbergen, 537.
16. Austin Cindric, 518.
17. Ryan Preece, 480.
18. Erik Jones, 474.
19. Brad Keselowski, 468.
20. Michael McDowell, 442.
21. Ross Chastain, 436.
22. AJ Allmendinger, 409.
23. Todd Gilliland, 406.
24. Zane Smith, 393.
25. Riley Herbst, 370.
26. Ricky Stenhouse Jr, 364.
27. John H. Nemechek, 355.
28. Austin Dillon, 349.
29. Alex Bowman, 310.
30. Cole Custer, 270.
31. Noah Gragson, 268.
32. Ty Dillon, 266.
33. Josh Berry, 264.
34. Connor Zilisch, 216.
35. Cody Ware, 183.
36. Casey Mears, 12.
37. Kevin Magnussen, 11.
38. Jimmie Johnson, 9.
39. Katherine Legge, 8.
40. BJ McLeod, 4.

NASCAR O'Reilly Series

POINTS LEADERS
Through Monday.
1. Justin Allgaier, 1016 (6).
2. Carson Kvapil, 751 (1).
3. Jesse Love, 747 (0).
4. Sheldon Creed, 733 (1).
5. Corey Day, 719 (2).
6. Brandon Jones, 692 (1).
7. Austin Hill, 688 (2).
8. Sammy Smith, 658 (0).
9. Parker Retzlaff, 619 (0).
10. Sam Mayer, 589 (0).
11. Brent Crews, 573 (0).
12. Taylor Gray, 567 (1).
13. William Sawalich, 560 (1).
14. Rajah Caruth, 547 (0).
15. Ryan Sieg, 493 (0).
16. Anthony Alfredo, 446 (0).
17. Brennan Poole, 394 (0).
18. Dean Thompson, 389 (0).
19. Jeremy Clements, 373 (0).
20. Jeb Burton, 338 (0).
21. Harrison Burton, 338 (0).
22. Blaine Perkins, 316 (0).
23. Patrick Staropoli, 310 (0).
24. Josh Bilicki, 273 (0).
25. Austin Green, 262 (0).
26. Lavar Scott, 246 (0).
27. Kyle Sieg, 245 (0).
28. Ryan Ellis, 221 (0).
29. Nicholas Sanchez, 155 (0).
30. Garrett Smithley, 155 (0).
31. Joey Gase, 132 (0).
32. Josh Williams, 129 (0).
33. Mason Maggio, 102 (0).
34. Alex Labbe, 93 (0).
35. JJ Yeley, 81 (0).
36. Andrew Patterson, 72 (0).
37. Nathan Byrd, 67 (0).
39. Dawson Cram, 52 (0).
40. Myatt Snider, 49 (0).
41. Jordan Anderson, 43 (0).
42. Will Rodgers, 41 (0).
43. Brad Perez, 36 (0).
44. David Starr, 33 (0).
45. Lee Pulliam, 32 (0).
46. Luke Fenhaus, 31 (0).
47. Blake Lothian, 30 (0).

NASCAR Truck Series

POINTS LEADERS
Through Monday.
1. Layne Riggs, 716.
2. Kaden Honeycutt, 616.
3. Chandler Smith, 563.
4. Christian Eckes, 496.
5. Giovanni Ruggiero, 491.
6. Ty Majeski, 446.
7. Ben Rhodes, 408.
8. Grant Enfinger, 391.
9. Daniel Hemric, 379.
10. Stewart Friesen, 373.
11. Tyler Ankrum, 365.
12. Jake Garcia, 341.
13. Andres Perez De Lara, 331.
14. Brenden Queen, 330.
15. Justin Haley, 314.
16. Tanner Gray, 311.
17. Corey Heim, 309.
18. Dawson Sutton, 260.
19. Mini Tyrrell, 233.
20. Cole Butcher, 233.
21. Connor Mosack, 212.
22. Kris Wright, 200.
23. Corey LaJoie, 190.
24. Landen Lewis, 183.
25. Frankie Muniz, 175.
26. Spencer Boyd, 123.
27. Tyler Reif, 119.
28. Daniel Dye, 117.
29. Parker Kligerman, 113.
30. Timmy Hill, 86.
31. Adam Andretti, 76.
32. Josh Reaume, 73.
33. Parker Eatmon, 56.
34. Clayton Green, 56.
35. Colin Braun, 55.
36. Caleb Costner, 55.
37. Jackson Lee, 53.
38. Nick Leitz, 51.
39. Conner Jones, 48.
40. Michael Christopher Jr, 44.
41. Toni Breidinger, 42.
42. Travis Pastrana, 38.
43. Kaz Grala, 34.
44. Nathan Nicholson, 32.
45. Luke Baldwin, 31.
46. Ben Maier, 30.

PRO BASKETBALL

WNBA

EAST	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	19	12	.613	—
Indiana	19	12	.613	—
New York	19	13	.594	½
Washington	18	12	.600	½
Chicago	12	19	.387	7
Toronto	10	21	.323	9
Connecticut	8	23	.258	11

WEST	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	25	7	.781	—
Las Vegas	22	9	.710	2½
x-Golden State	21	9	.700	3
x-Dallas	19	12	.613	5½
Los Angeles	12	18	.400	12
Portland	12	19	.387	12½
Phoenix	12	21	.364	13½
e-Seattle	6	27	.182	19½

x-Late game; e-Eliminated from playoff contention

TUESDAY'S RESULT
at Golden State 92, Toronto 81

WEDNESDAY'S RESULTS
at Washington 96, Dallas 92
at New York 92, Seattle 86
at Atlanta 96, Phoenix 82
at Chicago 95, Los Angeles 88

THURSDAY'S RESULTS
Las Vegas 86, at Indiana 84 (OT)
Los Angeles 89, at Minnesota 82
at Portland 97, Toronto 83

FRIDAY'S RESULTS
at Washington 79, Atlanta 74
at Connecticut 75, Phoenix 72
Golden State at Dallas, late

SATURDAY'S GAMES
Las Vegas at Minnesota, 1
Indiana at Chicago, 3:30
Seattle at Portland, 8:30

SUNDAY'S GAMES
Phoenix at Washington, 3
Las Vegas at New York, 12:30
Dallas at Minnesota, 3:30
Golden State at Los Angeles, 7

MONDAY'S GAMES
Toronto at Atlanta, 8
Chicago at Seattle, 10

TUESDAY'S GAMES
Washington at Las Vegas, 10
New York at Indiana, 7:30
Phoenix at Los Angeles, 10

WEDNESDAY'S GAMES
Toronto at Dallas, 8
Chicago at Golden State, 10
Minnesota at Portland, 10

THURSDAY'S GAMES
Washington at Las Vegas, 10
Atlanta at Connecticut, 7
Los Angeles at New York, 8

FRIDAY'S GAMES
Dallas at Indiana, 7:30
Portland at Seattle, 10

Mystics 79, Dream 74

Atlanta	**13**	**17**	**16**	**28**	**—**	**74**
Washington	**19**	**23**	**20**	**17**	**—**	**79**

ATLANTA	MIN	FG	FT	O-T	A	PF	PTS
Hillmon	19:59	2-4	1-1	2-4	1	2	5
Howard	31:05	6-18	3-4	1-3	1	6	19
Reese	33:15	1-12	5-8	7-16	2	5	7
Canada	34:40	2-6	5-9	1-3	7	5	9
Gray	37:39	11-23	2-3	0-6	2	3	26
Jones	21:28	2-8	0-0	2-7	3	4	4
Borlase	9:21	0-2	0-0	1-1	0	1	0
Okot	5:18	1-2	2-2	0-0	0	1	4
Sherrod	5:09	0-2	0-0	0-0	0	1	0
Walker-Kimbrough	2:06	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1	0
TOTALS	**200**	**25-77**	**18-27**	**14-40**	**16**	**29**	**74**

Percentages: FG .325, FT .667. **3-Point Goals:** 6-21, .286 (Howard 4-9, Gray 2-9, Jones 0-1, Canada 0-2). **Team Rebounds:** 12. **Team Turnovers:** 2. **Blocked Shots:** 7 (Howard 3, Gray, Jones, Okot, Reese). **Turnovers:** 16 (Canada 5, Jones 3, Borlase 2, Reese 2, Gray, Hillmon, Howard, Okot). **Steals:** 5 (Canada 2, Reese 2, Gray). **Technical Fouls:** None.

WASHINGTON	MIN	FG	FT	O-T	A	PF	PTS
Iriafen	31:51	6-10	2-6	3-7	5	4	15
Onyenwere	21:03	0-6	0-0	0-3	0	2	0
Austin	27:01	7-11	6-8	2-11	3	5	21
Amoore	14:13	0-1	0-0	0-1	0	2	0
Citron	32:28	5-10	2-4	0-3	3	3	14
McMahon	27:56	4-13	2-6	1-5	0	2	11
Betts	21:08	2-2	1-4	2-11	2	2	5
Prosper	18:34	4-8	1-4	3-4	1	5	10
Florez	5:46	1-1	1-2	0-1	0	2	3
TOTALS	**200**	**29-62**	**15-34**	**11-46**	**14**	**27**	**79**

Percentages: FG .468, FT .441. **3-Point Goals:** 6-14, .429 (Citron 2-3, Austin 1-1, Prosper 1-1, Iriafen 1-2, McMahon 1-3, Amoore 0-1, Onyenwere 0-3). **Team Rebounds:** 15. **Team Turnovers:** 1. **Blocked Shots:** 12 (Austin 5, Betts 3, Prosper 2, Citron, Florez). **Turnovers:** 17 (Austin 6, Iriafen 4, Citron 3, Amoore 2, Betts, Onyenwere). **Steals:** 6 (Iriafen 2, McMahon 2, Betts, Citron). **Technical Fouls:** None.
A: 4,200 (4,200). **T:** 2:22.

Sun 75, Mercury 72

Phoenix	**27**	**13**	**9**	**23**	**—**	**72**
Connecticut	**18**	**14**	**17**	**26**	**—**	**75**

PHOENIX	MIN	FG	FT	O-T	A	PF	PTS
Bonner	34:29	3-12	0-0	1-11	2	2	6
Brochant	22:07	3-6	0-0	0-0	1	0	6
Thomas	35:15	3-9	4-10	1-8	5	4	10
Copper	34:01	6-15	3-5	0-2	4	2	16
Plum	27:46	9-16	4-6	0-0	3	5	25
Mack	17:52	2-3	0-0	4-6	2	2	4
Whitcomb	12:55	1-4	2-2	0-1	1	1	5
Ayayi	11:53	0-1	0-0	0-1	0	3	0
Linskens	3:43	0-2	0-0	0-0	1	2	0
TOTALS	**200**	**27-68**	**13-23**	**6-29**	**19**	**21**	**72**

Percentages: FG .397, FT .565. **3-Point Goals:** 5-28, .179 (Plum 3-7, Whitcomb 1-3, Copper 1-6, Ayayi 0-1, Linskens 0-2, Brochant 0-3, Bonner 0-6). **Team Rebounds:** 14. **Team Turnovers:** 1. **Blocked Shots:** 1 (Bonner). **Turnovers:** 10 (Copper 3, Plum 3, Brochant 2, Thomas 2). **Steals:** 10 (Thomas 4, Copper 2, Ayayi, Mack, Plum, Whitcomb). **Technical Fouls:** None.

CONNECTICUT	MIN	FG	FT	O-T	A	PF	PTS
Miller	23:35	3-10	1-2	0-4	1	4	9
Nelson-Ododa	16:03	3-4	1-2	0-4	0	2	7
Griner	23:36	2-6	1-2	2-7	4	1	5
Lacan	31:07	3-9	3-4	0-3	4	3	9
Leger-Walker	19:30	2-3	0-0	0-1	5	4	6
Edwards	24:18	5-7	4-5	1-8	0	2	14
Burke	19:30	5-7	3-4	0-2	0	3	15
Rivers	16:59	2-6	0-0	0-1	4	1	4
Van Lith	14:17	2-4	1-1	0-2	1	3	6
Angloma	11:05	0-1	0-0	0-2	0	1	0
TOTALS	**200**	**27-57**	**14-20**	**3-34**	**19**	**24**	**75**

Percentages: FG .474, FT .700. **3-Point Goals:** 7-20, .350 (Leger-Walker 2-3, Burke 2-4, Miller 2-6, Van Lith 1-2, Angloma 0-1, Rivers 0-1, Lacan 0-3). **Team Rebounds:** 10. **Team Turnovers:** None. **Blocked Shots:** 5 (Griner 2, Angloma, Burke, Miller). **Turnovers:** 18 (Griner 3, Lacan 3, Leger-Walker 3, Nelson-Ododa 3, Burke 2, Miller 2, Rivers, Van Lith). **Steals:** 5 (Van Lith 2, Angloma, Burke, Lacan). **Technical Fouls:** None.
A: 8,910 (9,323). **T:** 2:12.

Sparks 89, Lynx 82

Late Thursday

Los Angeles	**21**	**19**	**26**	**23**	**—**	**89**
Minnesota	**22**	**26**	**23**	**11**	**—**	**82**

LOS ANGELES	MIN	FG	FT	O-T	A	PF	PTS
Burrell	27:37	5-11	4-4	1-2	2	1	17
Ogwumike	30:14	7-13	0-0	3-7	0	0	16
Hamby	24:40	7-9	2-3	3-9	2	3	16
Atkins	28:47	2-5	2-2	0-2	6	4	7
Wheeler	29:33	5-13	0-0	0-4	9	2	12
Brink	25:06	5-8	1-4	3-8	5	3	12
Akoa Makani	18:40	3-7	1-1	0-1	1	0	7
Gray	10:16	0-2	2-2	0-2	2	0	2
Park	5:06	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
TOTALS	**200**	**34-68**	**12-16**	**10-35**	**27**	**13**	**89**

Percentages: FG .500, FT .750. **3-Point Goals:** 9-24, .375 (Burrell 3-6, Ogwumike 2-4, Wheeler 2-6, Atkins 1-2, Brink 1-2, Gray 0-1, Hamby 0-1, Akoa Makani 0-2). **Team Rebounds:** 7. **Team Turnovers:** None. **Blocked Shots:** 4 (Brink 3, Ogwumike). **Turnovers:** 13 (Ogwumike 5, Atkins 2, Hamby 2, Akoa Makani, Brink, Burrell, Gray). **Steals:** 6 (Ogwumike 2, Akoa Makani, Atkins, Gray, Hamby). **Technical Fouls:** None.

MINNESOTA	MIN	FG	FT	O-T	A	PF	PTS
Collier	33:30	10-20	0-0	5-8	6	4	21
McBride	33:36	5-13	2-2	0-0	1	2	15
Howard	25:27	2-4	4-4	2-6	3	5	8
Miles	33:42	8-16	4-4	1-8	5	3	23
C.Williams	34:28	5-12	1-1	1-8	0	2	12
Coffey	12:50	1-2	0-2	2-2	0	2	3
Caldwell	8:28	0-2	0-0	2-2	1	2	0
Juhasz	8:13	0-2	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Delaere	6:24	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	1	0
Joklova	3:23	0-1	0-0	1-1	0	1	0
TOTALS	**200**	**31-73**	**11-13**	**14-35**	**17**	**22**	**82**

Percentages: FG .425, FT .846. **3-Point Goals:** 9-29, .310 (Miles 3-6, McBride 3-8, Coffey 1-2, C.Williams 1-3, Collier 1-4, Delaere 0-1, Joklova 0-1, Caldwell 0-2, Juhasz 0-2). **Team Rebounds:** 5. **Team Turnovers:** 1. **Blocked Shots:** 2 (C.Williams, Howard). **Turnovers:** 13 (Miles 5, Collier 3, Howard 2, McBride 2, C.Williams). **Steals:** 7 (Howard 2, Miles 2, C.Williams, Collier, Joklova). **Technical Fouls:** None.
A: 12,824 (19,356). **T:** 2:01.

Fire 97, Tempo 83

Late Thursday

Toronto	**23**	**14**	**22**	**24**	**—**	**83**
Portland	**25**	**26**	**30**	**16**	**—**	**97**

TORONTO	MIN	FG	FT	O-T	A	PF	PTS
Conde	28:42	3-9	0-0	1-6	2	3	6
Juskaite	26:17	5-14	2-3	2-6	3	3	12
Sabally	23:57	5-13	6-7	2-5	1	0	17
Allemand	31:45	4-5	0-0	1-5	12	3	11
Mabrey	21:57	3-9	0-1	0-2	1	3	9
Morrow	23:36	5-10	1-4	3-8	1	3	11
Rice	17:37	1-1	2-2	0-0	1	1	5
I.Harrison	15:05	2-6	4-5	2-3	1	1	8
Nurse	6:58	1-3	1-2	1-1	1	1	4
Fagbenle	3:08	0-2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Key	0:58	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
TOTALS	**200**	**29-72**	**16-24**	**12-36**	**23**	**18**	**83**

Percentages: FG .403, FT .667. **3-Point Goals:** 9-31, .290 (Allemand 3-4, Mabrey 3-8, Rice 1-1, Nurse 1-3, Sabally 1-4, I.Harrison 0-1, Morrow 0-1, Conde 0-4, Juskaite 0-5). **Team Rebounds:** 13. **Team Turnovers:** 1. **Blocked Shots:** 3 (Juskaite, Morrow, Sabally). **Turnovers:** 16 (I.Harrison 3, Juskaite 3, Mabrey 3, Allemand 2, Morrow 2, Rice 2, Conde). **Steals:** 7 (Morrow 3, Sabally 2, Allemand, Conde). **Technical Fouls:** None.

PORTLAND	MIN	FG	FT	O-T	A	PF	PTS
Engstler	24:21	3-6	0-0	3-6	2	4	7
Puoch	16:55	3-6	0-0	0-1	1	0	6
DiLeo	27:44	8-12	1-2	1-3	2	2	17
Carleton	29:38	3-9	2-2	1-11	0	1	10
Leite	29:47	5-12	15-17	1-4	11	4	27
Samuelson	18:56	2-4	0-0	1-2	1	1	6
Buhner	15:39	4-7	0-0	1-5	0	2	10
Winterburn	13:48	2-3	0-0	0-1	2	1	4
Williams	12:16	1-4	0-0	0-0	0	4	2
J.Harrison	10:56	2-3	2-3	0-0	4	3	8
TOTALS	**200**	**33-66**	**20-24**	**8-33**	**23**	**22**	**97**

Percentages: FG .500, FT .833. **3-Point Goals:** 11-27, .407 (J.Harrison 2-3, Samuelson 2-4, Buhner 2-5, Carleton 2-5, Leite 2-5, Engstler 1-1, Puoch 0-1, Winterburn 0-1, DiLeo 0-2). **Team Rebounds:** 6. **Team Turnovers:** 1. **Blocked Shots:** 4 (DiLeo 2, Carleton, Puoch). **Turnovers:** 15 (Leite 4, J.Harrison 3, DiLeo 2, Samuelson 2, Winterburn 2, Engstler, Williams). **Steals:** 7 (J.Harrison 2, Puoch 2, Carleton, Engstler, Winterburn). **Technical Fouls:** Engstler, 3:59 second. **A:** 12,379 (19,393). **T:** 2:08.

TENNIS

ATP

CANADIAN OPEN
At IGA Stadium; In Montreal
Purse: $9,415,725
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor

SINGLES — ROUND OF 32
Daniel Merida, Spain, def. Alex Michelsen, United States, 6-4, 6-7 (7-4), 6-1; Tallon Griekspoor, the Netherlands, def. Matteo Arnaldi (30), Italy, 3-6, 6-4, 6-3; Ben Shelton (5), United States, def. Zizou Bergs (31), Belgium, 6-3, 6-2; Botic Van de Zandschulp, the Netherlands, def. Hubert Hurkacz, Poland, 3-6, 7-6 (7-4), 7-5; Jakub Mensik (13), Czech Republic, def. Terence Atmane, France, 7-5, 6-4; Joao Fonseca (22), Brazil, def. Casper Ruud (9), Norway, 7-6 (8-6), 6-3; Thiago Agustin Tirante, Argentina, def. Alexei Popyrin, Australia, 6-3, 6-4.

DOUBLES — ROUND OF 32
Rafael Matos and Orlando Luz, Brazil, def. Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori (4), Italy, 6-4, 6-4; Edouard Roger-Vasselin, France, and Hugo Nys, Monaco, def. Marcel Granollers, Spain, and Horacio Zeballos (2), Argentina, 6-4, 3-6, 10-7; Mate Pavic, Croatia, and Marcelo Arevalo (3), El Salvador, def. Evan King and Robert Galloway, United States, 6-3, 6-4; Michael Venus, New Zealand, and Yuki Bhambri, India, def. Christian Harrison, United States, and Neal Skupski (5), Britain, 6-7 (11-9), 6-4, 10-8; Alejandro Tabilo, Chile, and Luciano Darderi, Italy, def. Arthur Rinderknech, France, and Valentin Vacherot, Monaco, 6-4, 7-5; Lorenzo Musetti and Matteo Arnaldi, Italy, def. Karen Khachanov and Andrey Rublev, Russia, 6-1, 3-6, 10-6; Kevin Krawietz, Germany, and Pierre-Hugues Herbert (8), France, def. Zizou Bergs and Alexander Blockx, Belgium, 6-3, 6-1.

ATP

Through Tuesday.

SINGLES RANKINGS
1. Jannik Sinner, Italy, 13450
2. Carlos Alcaraz, Spain, 8160
3. Alexander Zverev, Germany, 8120
4. Felix Auger-Aliassime, Canada, 4740
5. Novak Djokovic, Serbia, 3760
6. Daniil Medvedev, Russia, 3620
7. Alex de Minaur, Australia, 3560
8. Taylor Fritz, USA, 3400
9. Flavio Cobolli, Italy, 3330
10. Ben Shelton, USA, 2680
11. Alexander Bublik, Kazakhstan, 2535
12. Jiri Lehecka, Czech Republic, 2380
13. Lorenzo Musetti, Italy, 2375
14. Casper Ruud, Norway, 2345
15. Rafael Jodar, Spain, 2243
16. Andrey Rublev, Russia, 2230
17. Jakub Mensik, Czech Republic, 2205
18. Valentin Vacherot, Monaco, 2176
19. Learner Tien, USA, 2155

WTA

CANADIAN OPEN
At Sobeys Stadium; In Toronto
Purse: $7,433,076
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor

SINGLES — ROUND OF 32
Alina Korneeva, Russia, def. Iva Jovic (13), United States, 6-3, 6-4; Elena Rybakina (2), Kazakhstan, def. Ann Li (28), United States, 6-2, 7-5; Leylah Fernandez (30), Canada, def. Mirra Andreeva (5), Russia, 6-1, 6-4; Liudmila Samsonova, Russia, def. Maya Joint, Australia, 7-5, 6-7 (7-3), 6-2; Naomi Osaka (11), Japan, def. Elise Mertens (20), Belgium, 6-1, 6-2; Coco Gauff (4), United States, def. Maria Sakkari (29), Greece, 6-1, 6-4.

DOUBLES — ROUND OF 32
Ingrid Neel, Estonia, and Giuliana Olmos, Mexico, def. Aleksandra Krunic, Serbia, and Anna Danilina (2), Kazakhstan, 6-4, 7-5; Ulrikke Eikeri, Norway, and Quinn Gleason, United States, def. Bianca Andreescu and Kayla Cross, Canada, 6-4, 7-6 (7-3); Olivia Nicholls, Britain, and Tereza Mihalikova, Slovakia, def. Eudice Chong, Hong Kong, China, and Cristina Bucsa, Spain, 4-6, 7-5, 11-9; Sara Errani, Italy, and Nicole Melichar-Martinez (3), United States, def. Jessica Pegula and McCartney Kessler, United States, 6-2, 3-6, 10-8; Asia Muhammad, United States, and Fanny Stollar, Hungary, def. Xu Yifan and Qianhui Tang, China, 4-6, 6-3, 10-7; Aldila Sutjiadi, Indonesia, and Erin Routliffe, New Zealand, def. Kristina Mladenovic, France, and Hanyu Guo (4), China, 6-3, 6-7 (7-4), 10-5; Zhang Shuai, China, and Katerina Siniakova (1), Czechia, def. Sorana Cirstea, Romania, and Mirra Andreeva, Russia, 6-2, 6-2.

WTA

Through Tuesday.

SINGLES RANKINGS
1. Aryna Sabalenka, Belarus, 8550
2. Elena Rybakina, Kazakhstan, 8056
3. Jessica Pegula, USA, 6625
4. Coco Gauff, USA, 5649
5. Mirra Andreeva, Russia, 5293
6. Karolina Muchova, Czech Republic, 5168
7. Linda Noskova, Czech Republic, 5016
8. Iga Swiatek, Poland, 4539
9. Elina Svitolina, Ukraine, 4459
10. Amanda Anisimova, USA, 4353
11. Marta Kostyuk, Ukraine, 3925
12. Victoria Mboko, Canada, 3520
13. Naomi Osaka, Japan, 3281
14. Belinda Bencic, Switzerland, 2845
15. Jasmine Paolini, Italy, 2783
16. Iva Jovic, USA, 2636
17. Diana Shnaider, Russia, 2593
18. Sorana Cirstea, Romania, 2502
19. Ekaterina Alexandrova, Russia, 2301

SOFTBALL

Little League World Series

Double elimination
At Stallings Stadium; In Greenville, N.C.

SUNDAY'S RESULTS
Game 1: Florida 14, Washington 0 (4)
Game 2: Japan 4, New Jersey 1
Game 3: Kentucky 11, California 1 (4)

MONDAY'S RESULTS
Game 4: North Carolina 16, Canada 4 (4)
Game 5: Puerto Rico 7, Japan 2
Game 6: Florida 15, Italy 0 (3)
Game 7: North Carolina 2, Texas 1
Game 8: Kentucky 15, Connecticut 1 (4)

TUESDAY'S RESULTS
Game 9: Washington 7, Texas 3
Game 10: New Jersey 13, Connecticut 3 (4)
Game 11: Japan 1, California 0
Game 12: Canada 2, Italy 1

WEDNESDAY'S RESULTS
Game 13: New Jersey 11, Japan 0
Game 14: Washington 9, Canada 1

THURSDAY'S RESULTS
Game 15: North Carolina 5, Florida, 1
Game 16: Kentucky 2, Puerto Rico 0

FRIDAY'S RESULTS
Game 17: Florida 5, Washington 0
Game 18: New Jersey 4, Puerto Rico 0

SATURDAY'S GAMES
Game 19: Kentucky vs. New Jersey, 3
Game 20: North Carolina vs. Florida, 6

SUNDAY'S GAMES
CONSOLATION GAME
Game 21: Game 20 loser vs. Game 19 loser, 10 a.m.
CHAMPIONSHIP GAME
Game 22: Game 20 winner vs. Game 19 winner, 3

SOCCER

MLS

EAST	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Nashville	12	2	4	40	35	14
Inter Miami CF	11	2	5	38	45	32
New England	9	5	3	30	28	21
Chicago	9	6	2	29	32	23
New York City FC	7	6	5	26	31	24
Cincinnati	7	6	5	26	45	44
Charlotte FC	7	7	4	25	29	27
New York	7	7	4	25	29	39
D.C. United	5	5	8	23	26	29
Orlando City	6	10	2	20	30	47
Columbus	5	8	5	20	26	28
Toronto FC	3	7	8	17	24	32
Philadelphia	4	10	4	16	25	33
CF Montreal	4	10	4	16	24	35
Atlanta	3	12	3	12	19	33

WEST	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Vancouver	10	3	4	34	38	17
Los Angeles FC	10	5	4	34	35	19
San Jose	10	5	3	33	37	24
Houston	9	6	2	29	25	24
Real Salt Lake	8	6	3	27	29	25
FC Dallas	7	5	6	27	32	25
St. Louis City SC	7	6	5	26	24	24
Portland	7	8	3	24	33	33
Seattle	7	7	3	24	20	22
Minnesota United	6	6	6	24	20	25
Colorado	7	10	1	22	27	25
LA Galaxy	5	7	7	22	24	29
San Diego FC	5	7	6	21	32	29
Austin FC	4	9	5	17	22	36
Sporting KC	4	12	2	14	18	46

SATURDAY, AUG. 1
Nashville 2, at D.C. United 2
New England 2, at CF Montreal 2
at New York 3, Orlando City 2
at Philadelphia 3, Atlanta 2
Los Angeles FC 1, at Vancouver 1
Columbus 2, at Miami 2
at Chicago 2, Charlotte FC 1
Houston 2, at Sporting KC 0
San Diego FC 1, at Minnesota 1
Real Salt Lake 1, at St. Louis City SC 1
at Colorado 1, Austin FC 0
at Cincinnati 4, San Jose 2
FC Dallas 0, at LA Galaxy 0
at Portland 2, Seattle 1

SATURDAY'S MATCH
Houston at New England, 4:30

SATURDAY, AUG. 15
D.C. United at CF Montreal, 7:30
New York at Atlanta, 7:30
Columbus at Charlotte FC, 7:30
Cincinnati at Orlando City, 7:30
New England at Toronto FC, 7:30
LA Galaxy at Houston, 8:30
Miami at Nashville, 8:30
Sporting KC at Colorado, 9:30
Minnesota at Real Salt Lake, 9:30
San Diego FC at Los Angeles FC, 10:30
St. Louis City SC at San Jose, 10:30

SUNDAY, AUG. 16
Portland at Chicago, 6
Philadelphia at New York City, 6
Dallas at Austin, 8:30
Vancouver at Seattle, 10:30

NWSL

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The Washington Post
METRO
SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 2026 EZ RE

PETE KIEHART/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Phyllis Hammond, a voting member of Maryland's newly formed Commission on the House of Reformation and Instruction for Colored Children. Her uncle, Amos Hammond, was a resident at the facility and died there in 1921 at the age of 18.

At least 230 Black boys died in jail. Their families want answers.

Md. commission to study deaths of boys and teens buried between 1870 and 1939 near a juvenile facility

BY KATIE METTLER

Phyllis Hammond knew she needed to act the moment she emerged from her walk through the woods. She climbed into her car, tears streaming, and said a prayer.

God use me, in whatever and however way possible, to bring justice.

A week earlier, Hammond, 69, had received a letter from a genealogist with an unsettling revelation.

Her uncle, Amos Hammond, had died in 1921 at the age of 18 at the House of Reformation and Instruction for Colored Children, a segregated juvenile jail in Maryland with a documented history of abuse and neglect. He was among hundreds of Black boys and teens the state buried across the road from the facility in a forest in Prince George's County.

Hammond had never heard of an uncle named Amos. But the more she learned, the more she realized Amos was family. This spring she visited the graves, marked by crumbling cinder blocks with no names, and left resolved: "I'm going to be that voice those boys didn't have."

Hammond began that work this week, when she was recognized by Maryland Attorney General Anthony G. Brown as a voting member of the state's newly formed Commission on the House of Reformation and Instruction for Colored Children — an investigative body created by lawmakers earlier this year to unearth buried truths the state ignored for more than a century.

"We are determined to be the voice and to take a role in major decision-making throughout this entire process," Hammond said Tuesday at the first commission meeting. "We are firm and committed in our belief that no decision should be made about our children without full engagement and

SEE COMMISSION ON B14

Virginia boy's death comes amid a rise in e-scooter injuries

BY LIAM SCOTT

Badarayana Hungund was riding an electric scooter to a nearby friend's house in Northern Virginia late last month when the young boy collided with a minivan.

The 9-year-old, who police said was not wearing a helmet, died. The driver of the vehicle was not at fault, Fairfax police said.

One day later, a 5-year-old boy on an e-scooter was seriously injured in a hit-and-run in Southeast Washington, D.C. police said. No one has been charged in that case.

> The 9-year-old was riding one when he collided with a minivan

As e-scooters and electric bikes become more popular, doctors and researchers say they've seen a sharp increase in injuries related to the vehicles, including among children, in recent years.

Mary Beth Howard, a pediatric emergency medicine physician at the Johns Hopkins Children's Center in Baltimore, said she once treated seven kids for e-scooter injuries during an eight-hour shift. In her experience, she said, extremity injuries, such as broken bones, as well as head injuries, were most common in incidents related to e-scooters.

"We are seeing these injuries come in more frequently, and we're also seeing the severity increase," Howard said.

Howard co-authored a March paper that found there were 2,117 pediatric e-scooter injuries between 2020 and 2024 in the United States captured in the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System, which includes a nationally representative sample of emergency departments. "The true number of children injured on e-scooters in the United States is certainly higher," she said.

Badrinarayan, who would have started fifth grade this fall, liked playing soccer and chess, Venkata Pola, a close friend of his family, said in an interview.

Pola said Badrinarayan usually wore a helmet but suspects that on the day of the crash, the boy didn't think he would be riding the scooter for long enough to warrant wearing one.

The Washington Post was unable to reach Hungund's parents because, Pola said, they returned to India to remember their son

SEE E-SCOOTERS ON B15

D.C. judge dismisses charge

TIED TO REFLECTING POOL ALLEGATIONS

Man accused of damage says he is relieved

BY LIAM BOWMAN

A D.C. judge on Thursday granted prosecutors' request to dismiss a felony charge against the former Olympian who had been accused of vandalizing the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, a case that drew national scrutiny and inflamed tensions within the Trump administration.

David Hearn, a former Olympic canoeist, was arrested in June after he said he touched a piece of plastic liner that had begun visibly peeling from the Reflecting Pool, becoming a target of President Donald Trump, who railed against Hearn and other alleged vandals for damaging the newly refurbished landmark.

Outside observers and a Washington Post analysis repeatedly showed that the damage likely stemmed from a rushed renovation. The Justice Department ultimately moved to drop the case against Hearn, along with three other defendants accused of damaging the Reflecting Pool, after receiving Interior Department documents suggesting the peeling was caused by the "botched" repair job.

Hours after the judge's order, Hearn said he was relieved to see his case dismissed but that the ordeal has taken a toll.

"I don't think anyone likes people targeted or accused for things they didn't do," Hearn said on CNN's "The Source with Kaitlan Collins." "It's painful to be talked about like I'm some kind of scum, or not a very nice person. For that to be coming from a place of untruth … leaders don't do that."

Hearn said his case shows that "this could happen to anybody."

"Nobody is immune to this kind of government lawlessness," he added.

Hearn's lawyers this week filed a motion asking the court to dismiss Hearn's case with prejudice, which would prevent the government from reviving charges against their client.

"Given the positions of the parties, the Court discerns no reason why this felony case should remain pending against Mr. Hearn while the parties litigate, and the Court resolves, the remaining legal issues," D.C. Superior Court Judge Todd E. Edelman wrote in the order. Edelman said he would rule on that issue at a later date, according to the order.

The White House and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

In April, Trump unveiled plans to resurface the century-old Reflecting Pool on the National Mall. But the newly minted changes to the pool's basin soon began showing signs of deterioration, with chunks of "American Flag Blue" liner drifting to the surface and algae blooms clouding the water. Trump blamed vandals for causing the damage, accusing Hearn and others of

SEE CHARGE DISMISSED ON B15

TODAY'S WEATHER

8 a.m.	Noon	4 p.m.	8 p.m.
78°	88°	92°	83°

High today at approx. 3 p.m.: **93°**
Precip: **55%** Wind: **SSW 7-14 mph**

For weather news, go to **B18**

OBITUARIES

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PETE KIEHART/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

From left to right, Linda F. Gorham, Phyllis Hammond and Dorothy Givens. They are all on Maryland's newly formed Commission on the House of Reformation and Instruction for Colored Children.

Deaths of Black boys buried outside Md. jail will be studied

COMMISSION FROM **B13**

participation with the families."

Hammond articulated her priorities: to ensure the commission is independent, unflinching and centered on the wishes of the boys' living relatives as they weigh whether to exhume the remains, identify them and determine the children's true manner of death.

The commission will be chaired by Brown, the first Black attorney general in state history, and is composed of two dozen voting members and another 10 nonvoting advisory members, all with interest or expertise in forensic anthropology, archaeology, state history, juvenile justice policy and civil rights law. Members include Sen. Will Smith (D-Montgomery) and Del. Jeffrie E. Long Jr. (D-Calvert), who sponsored the commission legislation, and Prince George's County Executive Aisha Braveboy.

In addition to Hammond, two other living relatives will serve on the commission: Dorothy Givens, 83, representing her uncle Fred Ames Jr., and Linda F. Gorham, on behalf of her cousin Richard Saunders.

The Washington Post first reported on the abandoned and overgrown graves a year ago, after former leaders of the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) made their existence public. A Post investigation found that at least 230 children died at the House of Reformation between 1870 and 1939, the most comprehensive public accounting to date based on state records, newspaper archives and death certificates.

Black Caucus lawmakers visited the site last August, and its members later championed a law signed by Gov. Wes Moore (D) that allocates $1 million for the commission's initial budget. The African American Heritage Preservation Program awarded another $200,000 in grant funding.

"This is the state of Maryland, all of us, finally doing what should have been done long ago," Brown said at the meeting, explaining that the body is expected to submit a preliminary report on its work by the end of 2027 and a final report in December 2029. He told members that the House of Reformation commission may be the most significant investigative body that Maryland has created in the past decade, especially as the Trump administration works to strip recognition of the legacy of racism from the nation's history.

"We're meeting at a time when many in our federal leadership are turning away from acknowledging the history that made this country what it is," Brown said. "That makes what we're doing here more important, not less. The state of Maryland is choosing to look clearly at a painful chapter of its own history, not to perform accountability, but to actually pursue it."

PETE KIEHART/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Givens speaks Tuesday during the inaugural meeting of the commission in Crownsville, Maryland.

The year since the House of Reformation gravesite's public rediscovery has been both revelatory and fraught, a navigation of tensions over institutional racism, state power and the people impacted by both. Those tensions were made clear at the Tuesday afternoon meeting, where the families reminded commission members that for them, this process is personal.

"We are mourning," said Gorham, a licensed psychologist. "I know we talked about remains and records, but just know that . . . we have souls that need to be tended to."

Running parallel to the commission's efforts is the Forgotten Children Initiative at Georgetown University — a first-of-its-kind research effort founded by youth justice advocate and former DJS deputy secretary Marc Schindler that is working to identify similar abandoned cemeteries nationwide. He and former DJS secretary Vincent Schiraldi oversaw the state's earliest efforts in 2024 to uncover the House of Reformation's history, and Schindler wanted to continue the work after he left the government.

CAROLINE GUTMAN/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Hammond wants the commission to remain centered on the wishes of the boys' living relatives as they weigh whether to exhume the remains, identify them and determine how the children died.

To date, the Forgotten Children Initiative's lead genealogist, Malissa Ruffner, has contacted 73 potential living relatives for 24 of the boys. Family members for about a dozen of the boys have responded.

Ruffner's previous genealogical work includes helping to identify the living descendants of the 272 enslaved people who were sold in 1838 by Georgetown's Jesuit founders. She said that she has been able to find some family members for the House of Reformation children within a few hours and others have taken days — a process that includes sifting through decades of birth and death certificates, state records, newspaper archives, census information and obituaries.

The families identified so far have already developed an intense bond, forged by shared grief and righteous rage. In June, they visited the abandoned cemetery in the woods to hold a funeral — the kind of dignified ceremony the boys did not receive a century ago.

So far, the families have met privately with Brown. They were not in attendance at a May ceremony at the Cheltenham juvenile detention facility where the House of Reformation once stood. That gathering, held by current DJS leaders, state lawmakers and the governor, served as a history lesson for the broader community and ended with the unveiling of a road marker that acknowledges the institution's segregated past.

"Loving your country does not mean lying about its history," Moore said that day. "Loving your country does not mean pretending like the awful and dark and bad spots did not happen. It means being able to embrace everything, flaws and all, and say that every day is an opportunity for us to be better."

Moore said he was "committed" to honoring the boys, including locating the grave of each one in the woods.

That work will likely take years and a great deal more money than the $1.2 million currently allocated, the attorney general said at Tuesday's meeting. The commission will rely on the expertise of forensic anthropologists and archaeologists who have overseen similar investigations, including Erin Kimmerle, who led a years-long excavation project at the Dozier School for Boys in Florida, a reform facility where officials buried dozens of children who died in state custody.

Kimmerle, an advisory commission member, told the group that they should approach this process with the sensitivity of a homicide investigation.

"For them, the past is the present," she said of the families. "Historic justice and modern justice are interwoven."

Gorham emphasized that point.

"It doesn't matter that Richard, my cousin, died when he was 15 in 1935. I still feel it," she said. "There's a really deep thing that's happening here. If you're serving, I want you to feel it."

For Hammond, among the commission's most important missions is using their power to ensure no child detained in state custody is ever treated the way her uncle Amos was. To crystalize that conviction, she read the room a poem she wrote after visiting the abandoned cemetery for the first time.

"If these woods could talk, I wonder what they would say?" she read. "If these woods could talk, do you think they could share each of these boys' tragic lives and deaths while entrusted in the hands of the juvenile system? If these woods could talk, could they share the pain and the scars that they endured across their fragile bodies?"

"If these woods could talk," she continued, "I wonder if these woods would have raised their voices loud and clear against the lawlessness of what they'd seen, heard and became a part of."

"If only these woods could talk," she said, "maybe many lives could have been saved."

SALWAN GEORGES/THE WASHINGTON POST

A person rides an electric scooter along K Street NW in Washington in 2019. Doctors and researchers say they've seen a sharp increase in injuries related to the vehicles, including among children.

As e-scooters get more popular, more children are getting hurt

E-SCOOTERS FROM **B13**

with family.

"He's one of the best kids in the community," said Pola, who added that their two families were like one. "I'm still trying to come out of the trauma."

More rides mean more injuries

Ridership of electric scooters and bicycles has grown across the country and locally over the past decade. More than 130 U.S. cities, including Washington, offered ride-share e-scooter systems in 2025, according to the Department of Transportation.

In the District, there were more than 3.8 million e-scooter trips during the first six months of 2026, according to city data. By comparison, there were about 140,000 e-scooter trips during the same period in 2019.

Across North America, shared micromobility ridership in 2024 grew 31 percent, reaching a new high with at least 225 million trips, including nearly 85 million e-scooter trips, according to the North American Bikeshare and Scootershare Association.

Cheap, imported e-scooters can easily be bought online and are sometimes seen as toys. As e-scooters and e-bikes have become more common, so, too, have injuries.

In 2025, DC Health recorded 97 injuries among people up to age 20 on scooters of all types in the District, compared with 51 injuries two years earlier. So far this year, the agency has documented 82 scooter-related injuries for people age 0 to 20.

Between 2017 and 2024, there were an estimated 698,500 total emergency department visits across the United States linked to e-scooters, e-bikes, and self-balancing scooters and hoverboards, rising from 37,300 in 2017 to 149,100 in 2024, according to an April report by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. E-scooters accounted for about 380,000 of those total visits.

The report also documented 533 fatalities related to these devices over the seven-year-period. E-bikes were linked to 58 percent of those deaths, while e-scooters were tied to about 39 percent.

Of those killed in e-scooter accidents, two were children under the age of 5, and nine were between the ages of 5 and 14.

Through media reports, The Post also identified at least six other minors killed in e-scooter accidents around the United States between 2024 and this year.

In 2025, an 8-year-old in California was trapped under a car and killed while riding an e-scooter. That same year, a 10-year-old and a 9-year-old were struck by a vehicle while riding an e-scooter together in Las Vegas; the elder child died, and the younger one was injured.

In May in Florida, a 13-year-old was hit by a vehicle and killed while riding an e-scooter. The next month, a 13-year-old was killed while riding an e-scooter when he was struck by a vehicle in New York City.

> *"We are seeing these injuries come in more frequently, and we're also seeing the severity increase."*
>
> **Mary Beth Howard,** a pediatric emergency medicine physician at the Johns Hopkins Children's Center in Baltimore

Howard, the pediatric emergency medicine physician, said a combination of factors explains why kids keep getting hurt or killed riding e-scooters. They may not have much experience operating a vehicle, she said. Children also tend to be less familiar with traffic rules, and they don't have the coordination to control what are often heavy e-scooters, she added.

Young children, along with older adults, are most likely to sustain a serious injury when struck by a vehicle, according to Katherine Harmon, who researches active travel injuries at the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center.

"With children, they're smaller. They're lighter," she said. "They're more likely to go airborne."

'Please have your kids wear helmets'

On July 23, officers responded to the Herndon area of Fairfax County around 5:30 p.m. following reports that a 9-year-old boy had been struck by a vehicle, police said. Preliminary indications showed that as a minivan entered a townhouse community, the boy hit the rear passenger side of the vehicle, police said.

The 9-year-old was riding a Volpam Q1 scooter, according to police; authorities have not said how fast he was traveling. That scooter model can go up to 16 mph, according to a description on the company's website. The description also says the scooter is "designed for adults."

Following the incident, police urged parents to make sure their kids are safe when playing outside. "Please have your kids wear helmets. Teach them the basic safety rules. Keep an eye on them," Fairfax police Capt. Chris Cosgriff said at a news briefing after the crash.

The next day, at about 6:45 p.m., D.C. police officers responded to a parking lot in a residential community in Southeast Washington, near Congress Heights. A preliminary investigation determined that the driver of a dark-blue Nissan with Virginia plates was traveling at a high speed when they struck a 5-year-old boy riding a children's e-scooter, police said.

DC Fire took the boy to a local hospital for treatment for life-threatening injuries, police said. The driver fled the scene, and an arrest has not been made, police added.

One week later, neighborhood residents were still reeling from the crash.

Malik Utley said lots of kids play outside in the neighborhood. "That could have been my kid," Utley said; he has a 4-year-old son.

Despite the children outside, Mira Johnson said, drivers tend to speed through the neighborhood.

"If they put speed humps right here, it'll help them slow down," said Johnson, who has two daughters, a 9-month-old and a 6-year-old. "Safety is not enforced in this community like it should be," she added.

A spokesperson for the District's Department of Transportation said that the incident occurred in a private parking area, outside the agency's roadway jurisdiction, and that an agency review found no traffic safety investigation requests, pending inspections, work orders or active DDOT projects on the street.

"The safety concerns of residents are important to DDOT," the spokesperson said. "DDOT welcomes additional information about concerns on specific public streets or blocks in the surrounding neighborhood."

In D.C., riders must be at least 18 years old to rent an e-scooter, according to DDOT, but District law says riders must be at least 16 to ride a personal e-scooter. Rental e-scooters are capped at 10 mph in the city for safety reasons, according to DDOT. (In Virginia, riders must be at least 14 to ride an e-scooter unsupervised.)

Despite those age restrictions, D.C. Council member Charles Allen (D-Ward 6), who chairs the transportation committee, said he's concerned that kids are continuing to ride e-scooters around the city.

"They're heavier, they're faster, and there's less margin for error," he said. "There's a reason why kids are not supposed to be operating e-bikes and e-scooters."

The District offers two-year permits to scooter companies, a process that will begin again in the fall, according to Allen. He said he wanted to learn more about how the companies are working to restrict minors from renting e-scooters.

"It gives us an opportunity to be very focused on safety," he said. "That's the opportunity, frankly, where we get to set the terms."

Charge against former Olympian in Reflecting Pool case is dismissed

CHARGE DISMISSED FROM **B13**

slicing off portions of the pool but offering no evidence.

"It was slashed with a knife, or box cutter, high grade colored waterproofing liner — it was VANDALISM!" Trump wrote in a July social media post.

Hearn, 67, has said he was passing by the Reflecting Pool in June and had only touched a piece of floating pool liner before he was arrested by U.S. Park Police. Initially charged with a misdemeanor, a grand jury last month indicted Hearn on a felony count of malicious destruction of property, with U.S. Attorney Jeanine Pirro alleging that he had "forcefully and violently" ripped liner from the basin.

"That was a little bit of a shock," Hearn said Thursday on CNN. "The things she was saying were so outrageous that I had to think, 'What did I do to get her to say these things about me?'"

The legal battle touched off a furor, as Trump and his supporters lambasted Hearn in the media for the alleged crime, while critics said Hearn was a "scapegoat" for the administration and condemned the case as an abuse of power.

The legal battle came to an unexpected end late last week, when the Justice Department reversed course and asked the judge to dismiss the case. In a filing, prosecutors walked back their vandalism claims, writing that new information received from the Interior Department showed that the peeling liner was the result of faulty installation by the contractor and "not vandalism as initially represented."

"Had [the Interior Department] been forthcoming with the information clearly in its possession, the government would not have sought a grand jury indictment," according to the filing.

Pirro's office also moved to drop misdemeanor charges against three other people accused of damaging the pool.

In the days since, Trump has continued to blame vandals for the damage and said Pirro "folded like an umbrella" for abandoning the case.

Attorneys for the defendants have cast doubt on the Justice Department's version of events, alleging that prosecutors knew about the faulty installation from the beginning but pursued vandalism charges anyway.

Prosecutors' "current effort to assign sole fault to DOI therefore confirms, rather than excuses, the government's bad faith," Hearn's lawyers wrote in a filing this week. "It relied on DOI to obtain the indictment, failed to investigate before charging, and now seeks to disclaim responsibility for information held by the very agencies on whose accusations and witnesses it relied."

The attorneys allege that prosecutors had access to documents showing that the pool lining was failing before Hearn's arrest. They also allege that a key government witness testified to a grand jury that repairs would have been necessary regardless of Hearn's actions, but that prosecutors later recalled the witness and "elicited" them to say that damage "attributable to Mr. Hearn" would be more than $1,000, according to the filing.

Hearn's attorneys are also asking the judge that they be allowed to review grand jury records related to the case to see whether prosecutors potentially misled jurors to secure an indictment, according to the filing.

ROD LAMKEY/AP

David Hearn, center, with his attorneys. A D.C. judge on Thursday granted prosecutors' request to dismiss a felony charge against Hearn, who had been accused of vandalizing the Reflecting Pool.

The Washington Post

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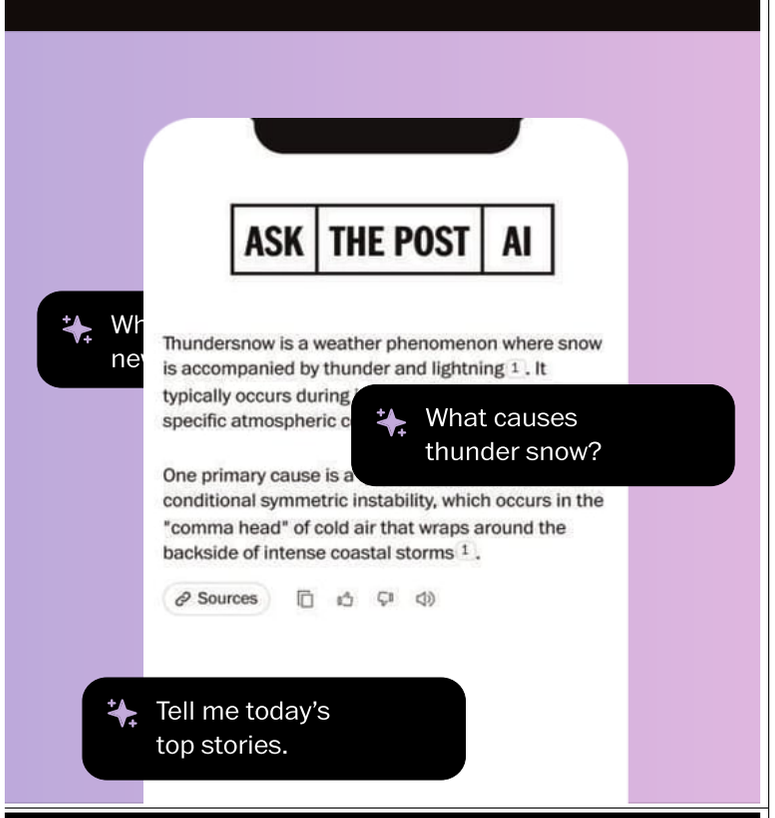
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Thundersnow is a weather phenomenon where snow is accompanied by thunder and lightning [1]. It typically occurs during
specific atmospheric c
One primary cause is a
conditional symmetric instability, which occurs in the "comma head" of cold air that wraps around the backside of intense coastal storms [1].
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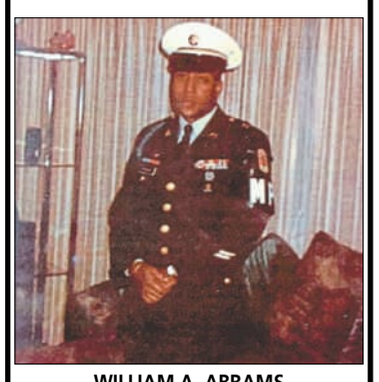
DEATH NOTICE

ABRAMS



WILLIAM A. ABRAMS
Passed away on July 23, 2026. He is survived by his loving wife, Regina Abrams; his mother, Thelma Scott; five children; two step-children; one sister and brother; five grandchildren; two nephews, one niece, other loving relatives and friends. Viewing will be held on Friday, August 14, 2026, at 9 am, followed by Homegoing service at 10 am at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, 1800 Hamlin St. N.E. Interment, Quantico Veteran's Cemetery.
www.mcguire-services.com

BERGE

THOMAS BERGE
Thomas Wayne Berge, 101 of Eldersburg, Maryland, passed away on Wednesday, July 8, 2026.
Beloved husband of the late Harriet G Berge Alfstead for 52 years. Born on May 12, 1925, in Valders, Wisconsin, the son of the late Helen (Potts) Berge and the late Walter F Berge and his late stepmom Agnes Berge. Survived by his step sister Mary and proceeded in death by brothers Allen Berge, Robert Berge, & James Berge.
Tom served in the US Navy during World War II from 1943 to 1946 as an Aviation Radioman. After being honorably discharged from the Navy, he attended Luther College. Upon graduation, he taught school and coached basketball at Valders High School. He then taught and coached football at Horicon High School where the team won the conference championship. Following his teaching career, Tom served as an FBI Special Agent for 20 years with assignments in San Antonio, Texas, Baltimore, Maryland and the Washington DC Field Office in Hyattsville, Maryland. After retiring from the FBI in 1982, Tom continued serving the government as a contract security background investigator.
He is survived by his son, Steve Berge, Steve's wife Kathi of Ocean City, Maryland and by Tom's daughter, Susan Watkins and her husband Tim of Finksburg, Maryland, Tom was grandfather to Kelley Berge, Patrick Berge, Alexandra Vojtech and her husband Ritchie, Megan Chrencik and her husband Eric, Timothy Watkins Jr. and his wife Rachel, & Brian Watkins. Great grandfather to Riley Berge, Madison Berge, Penelope Vojtech, Easton Vojtech, Hattie Chrencik, Jack Chrencik, Theodore Chrencik, and Eli Watkins.
A memorial service will be held in Valders, Wisconsin at a later date. Interment will be in West Valders cemetery. In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to Itineris foundation Incorporated. 2050 Rockrose Ave. suite a Baltimore, MD 21211 online consult condolences at www.burrier-queen.com

DAY

NANCY DAY (Age 85)
Nancy L. Day passed away on August 4, 2026, after complications from Alzheimer's disease. She was retired from NIH where she worked for 17 years. She began her nursing career at York, PA, Hospital. Later, she worked for a pediatric group in Plymouth Meeting, PA. And Chestnut Hill Hospital in Philadelphia. Nancy graduated from York Hospital School of Nursing and Hood College. She loved to travel and visited all the United States, most of Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Greece, Morocco, and Europe. Nancy is survived by her husband of 63 years, Richard, and her daughter, Tracy, also of Gaithersburg, where Nancy lived since 1973. A service and interment will be held Monday, August 17th at Salem Cemetery in lower Windsor in York County, Pennsylvania, at 1 pm.

DEATH NOTICE

LACHTER

STEPHEN HARRIS LACHTER
Stephen Harris Lachter, 81, of Washington, D.C., passed away peacefully on August 6, 2026, surrounded by his family after a six-year battle with leukemia.
Born November 21, 1944, Stephen dedicated his life to the field of aviation law, earning respect for his sharp intellect, integrity, and unwavering commitment to his clients and colleagues. His work helped shape important developments in aviation regulation and safety, and he was known for his mentorship within the legal community. In addition, Stephen was an active member of the Adas Israel Congregation for over three decades.
Stephen is survived by his beloved wife, Sandra Lachter, and his two daughters, Danielle and Amelia, who will forever cherish his wisdom, humor, and love.
Funeral services will be held on Sunday, August 9, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at Judean Memorial Gardens.
Contributions in his memory may be made to Blood Cancer United.
All services are entrusted to Sagel Bloomfield Danzansky Goldberg Funeral Care.

DEATH NOTICE

LANGENDERFER

JANET RUTH LANGENDERFER (Age 70)
Janet Ruth (Schwartz) Langenderfer died of cancer Wednesday, August 5, 2026. She is survived by her loving husband of 40 years, Tom Langenderfer, as well as, mother, Marilyn Schwartz; sisters, Francine Freedman, Shelley Miller, Debbie Tipton, and Nancy Gusman and many cousins, nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by father, Stuart Schwartz.

The funeral service will be held at Ohr Kodesh Congregation in Chevy Chase at 11 on Sunday, August 9, 2026. Burial to follow at King David Cemetery in Falls Church. Shiva will be observed on Sunday, August 9; Monday, August 10; and Tuesday, August 11, with minyan at 7:30.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to K9s 4 Warriors, Breakthrough T1D (formerly Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation), Casey House of Montgomery & Prince George's Hospice, Ohr Kodesh Congregation.

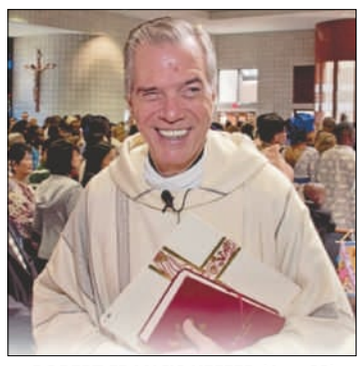
When the need arises, let families find you in the Funeral Services Directory.

To be seen in the Funeral Services Directory, please call paid Death Notices at 202-334-4122.

The Washington Post

DEATH NOTICE

KEFFER



ROBERT FRANCIS KEFFER (Age 83)
Rev. Robert Francis Keffer, lovingly known as "Father Bob," passed away on July 27, 2026, in Herndon, Virginia, at the age of 83. Born on August 14, 1942, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Raphael J. Keffer and Clara E. (Fefolt) Keffer, Father Bob dedicated his life to faith, service, and community.
From an early age, Father Bob felt a calling to serve God and others. At just 14 years old, he entered St. Charles College Seminary in Catonsville, Maryland, a minor seminary where he began his journey toward priesthood. He continued his studies at St. Mary's Seminary in Roland Park, Maryland, preparing for a lifetime of devotion as a Catholic priest. On May 18, 1968, he was ordained for the Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., at St. Matthew's Cathedral in Washington. He continued his education at Loyola College in Baltimore, Maryland, where he received an MS degree in Pastoral Counseling in 1995.
Father Bob's ministry spanned decades and touched countless lives across the Washington area. His first assignment was at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart. He later served as Chaplain for the Newman Centers at both the University of Maryland and George Washington University—roles that allowed him to guide and inspire young adults during pivotal moments in their lives. His final parish assignment was at the Church of the Resurrection in Burtonsville, Maryland.
Even after retiring to Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, Father Bob continued his ministry with unwavering dedication. He served at St. James Catholic Church in Charles Town, St. Peter's Catholic Church in Harpers Ferry, and St. Agnes Catholic Church in Shepherdstown. As a parishioner at St. Agnes, he fully immersed himself in the community by joining the choir and participating in small groups during Lent.
Father Bob had an extraordinary ability to create community wherever he went. Those he met through his parishes and ministries became not only his friends but also an extended family who cherished his kindness and generosity.
Beyond his priestly duties, Father Bob found joy in hobbies that reflected his love for people and nature. A talented cook with a generous spirit, he delighted in sharing meals with others—a simple yet profound way of bringing people together. His garden was another source of joy; he cultivated fruits, vegetables, flowers, and plants that he shared freely with those around him. His knitting and quilting projects were all inspired by love, as the many recipients of these gifts will tell you.
Father Bob also cherished his small log cabin home in West Virginia—a place of comfort where he welcomed friends and family alike. Throughout his life, he was deeply devoted to his companion dogs; each held a special place in his heart. In recent years, Zelda—his beloved "sweets"—was a constant source of comfort and companionship.
Father Bob is survived by his brothers Charles J. Keffer (and wife Barbara) and Richard T. Keffer (and wife Mary Rose), as well as his sister Elizabeth Keffer Platt. He also leaves behind 14 nieces and nephews who adored him and a multitude of cousins who were part of his extended family network.
He was predeceased by his parents, Raphael J. Keffer and Clara E. (Fefolt) Keffer, but carried their love and values throughout his life.
Father Bob's legacy is one of kindness, love, faithfulness to God's work, and an unwavering commitment to helping others find spiritual guidance and community connection.
May Rev. Robert Francis "Father Bob" Keffer's memory be a blessing to all who knew him—his family members who loved him dearly; the countless individuals whose lives were enriched by his ministry; and every person who experienced the warmth of his hospitality or the beauty of his garden's bounty.
Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord; may perpetual light shine upon him always. A Visitation will be held on August 9, 2026, from 6 PM to 7 PM at Church of the Resurrection, 3319 Greencastle Rd. Burtonsville, MD. A Vigil Mass will be held on August 9, 2026, at 7 PM at Church of the Resurrection, 3319 Greencastle Rd.
A Visitation will be held on August 10, 2026, from 10 AM to 11 AM at Church of the Resurrection, 3319 Greencastle RD. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on August 10, 2026, at 11 AM at Church of the Resurrection 3319 Greencastle Rd. There will be a repast directly after the Mass at the Rev. Robert F. Keffer Parish Life Center. The interment at Gate of Heaven Cemetery, Silver Spring, MD will follow the repast. A memorial service will be scheduled at a later date at St. Agnes Church in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.
Donations can be made in Robert Keffer's remembrance to https://k-9lifesavers.org/donate or by check to K-9 Lifesavers, 259 Thorny Point RD, Stafford, VA 22554. Zelda was found through this organization.

DEATH NOTICE

COURSEY

JERRY J. COURSEY (Age 74)
Jerry John Coursey III, a kind and loving man, passed away peacefully at age 74 on August 3, 2026, after a long and brave struggle with Alzheimer's. Born in Denver, he spent much of his childhood in Long Beach, California, and West Hartford, Connecticut, before settling in Washington, D.C., and Silver Spring, Maryland, for most of his adult life. He was a devoted husband of 31 years to Mary Griffin, and a cherished father of Connor (Chloe Delaney) and Ian. Preceded in death by his parents, Jerry ("Corky") and Joanne Kelly Coursey, Jerry is survived by his brothers Michael, Daniel, Martin (Nancy), and Charles (Mary), along with several beloved nieces, nephews and cousins.
Jerry moved through the world with gentle grace, quiet wit, and an enduring faith. He found his greatest joys in life's simpler pleasures: the rhythm of a baseball game, watching football, the comfort of a beautiful melody, and the quiet company of a good book.
Guided by a deep commitment to helping others, Jerry graduated from Northwest Catholic High School in West Hartford and earned his bachelor's degree from the College of the Holy Cross. He later completed a master's degree in Organization Development from the NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science at American University. Early in his career, Jerry dedicated his time to nonprofits that supported seniors, the unhoused, and vulnerable communities. He then spent more than 30 years at the USDA, focusing on building stronger teams and improving workplace practices.
The family extends their deepest gratitude to his extraordinary caregivers at Necitas Assisted Living, his longtime and loyal teammates on the Mudhens softball team and to Papi, who was by his side for so many years.
A memorial service and burial will be held on August 28 at 10 am at Reflection Park, 16621 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, followed by a reception at the Manor at Silo Falls, 19501 Georgia Avenue, Brookeville, MD. In honor of Jerry's life, memorial contributions may be made to SOME (So Others Might Eat) at some.org or to a charity of your choice.

KELLER BOLLWEG

CYNTHIA KELLER BOLLWEG (Age 86)
Cynthia (Elizabeth Mikules) Keller Bollweg, 86, of Washington, D.C., passed away peacefully on August 3, 2026, at Georgetown University Hospital, surrounded by her large, loving family.

A cherished and adored wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and treasured friend, Cyndi dedicated her life to giving to and helping others. She was incredibly kind, compassionate, generous, loyal, loving — and glamorous. Everyone who knew her loved her, and she welcomed everyone she met into her home and heart. She was lovingly known as "Saint Cyndi" and "Our Beloved Queen."

Born on July 28, 1940, in Washington, D.C., Cyndi began her career as a successful model in New York City. On a summer trip home to Maryland, she met her first husband, Thomas Townsend Keller III, and together they had four children. She later became a successful entrepreneur and married Charles H. Bollweg, who brought two more children into her life. Together, they adopted a seventh child, completing their beautiful, blended family.

Cyndi is survived by her devoted husband, Charles H. Bollweg; her seven children, Shawn Keller, Kimberly Boone (Darryl), Karen Keller, Thomas Keller (Heather), Chad Bollweg (Rebecca), Corby Keenan (Chris), and Lorfils Millery (Elyce); her sixteen grandchildren, Matthew O'Connor (Becca Steele), Keegan Boone (fiancée, Taylor), Riley Strittmatter (Chad), Keller Boone, Madison Keller (Tony), Regan Keller (fiancé, Hunter), Jack Keller, Tess Boone, Aidan Bollweg, Owen Bollweg, Kendall Keenan, Reese Keenan, Lorfils-Zachariah Millery, Joshua Millery, Hannah Millery, and Vita Millery; and her four great-grandchildren, Zoey O'Connor, Boone Strittmatter, Tatum Strittmatter, and Blaire Boone.

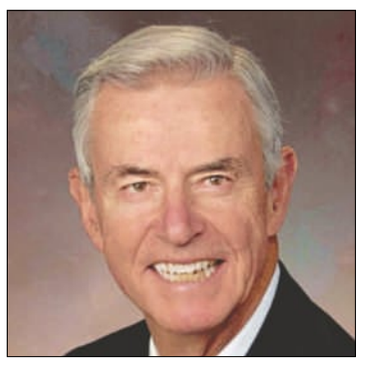
She was preceded in death by her father, Paul Francis Mikules; her mother, Rebecca Elizabeth (Libby) Laughtenberger; and her brother, Paul Kelly (Mike) Mikules.

Cyndi's warmth, grace, and boundless love touched every life she encountered. Her legacy lives on in the countless hearts she opened and the family she so deeply loved.

Visitation will be held on Sunday, August 9, from 3 PM to 6 PM at Pumphrey Funeral Home in Bethesda, MD. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Monday, August 10, at 11 AM at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church in Potomac, MD, followed by burial at Parklawn Memorial Cemetery in Rockville, MD.

Contributions may be made in Cyndi's memory to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital or MedStar Georgetown University Hospital.

RUPPE



PHILIP EDWARD RUPPE
SEPTEMBER 29, 1926 - AUGUST 1, 2026
Philip E. Ruppe, a former six-term U.S. Representative from Michigan, passed away peacefully on August 1, 2026, in Bethesda, Maryland, at the age of 99 – just weeks shy of his 100th birthday. Known for his integrity, tireless advocacy for his constituents, and commitment to family, friends, and faith, Phil left a legacy of service to his home state and country.

Born on September 29, 1926, in Laurium in Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula, Phil traced his roots to the area's copper mining boom of the late 19th century. His paternal grandfather, Peter Ruppe, emigrated to America from Slovenia in 1854 and established the P. Ruppe and Sons store in Hancock, MI. His maternal grandfather, Joseph Bosch, founded the Bosch Brewing Company, one of the most successful regional breweries in Michigan.

After attending Canterbury School, Phil joined the Navy V-12 program in 1944 and went on to graduate from Yale University in 1948. He later served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War. Returning to Michigan, Phil served as the director of Houghton National Bank and Commercial National Bank of L'Anse and ran the Bosch Brewery with his brother, James, until it was sold in 1965.

Elected as a Republican to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1966, Phil proudly represented the Upper Peninsula and twelve counties of northern Michigan for twelve years. He earned a reputation on both sides of the aisle for being a thoughtful lawmaker who prioritized bipartisan collaboration to advance his constituents' interests. Among many achievements, he successfully championed the federal designation of the U.P.'s Isle Royale National Park Wilderness area, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, and the Seney National Wildlife Refuge. Colleagues remembered him "as one of the good guys in the process."

Family and public service were deeply entwined in Phil's life. In 1957, he married Loret Miller, great-granddaughter of the founder of the Miller Brewing Company, and together they raised five daughters. Loret was a distinguished public servant in her own right, serving as Director of the Peace Corps and U.S. Ambassador to Norway before her death in 1996. In 2000, Phil married Ann Boutell, sharing two decades of happy companionship together in Bethesda, MD and Palm Beach, FL until her passing in 2022.

Phil loved playing bridge, tennis, and golf. He read widely, was passionate about history, and enjoyed sharing stock market insights with his children and grandchildren. Those who knew him will cherish his generosity, love of adventure, intellect, and keen sense of humor.

Phil is survived by his daughters Antoinette Greenberg, Adele Ruppe (Peter Grant), Katherine Ruppe (Kevin Jarvis), and Mary Ruppe (Stuart) Nash; his stepchildren Lawrence (Karin) Finn, Nancy Mansour, Barkley (Michael) Henning, and Barbara Petterson; and many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews. He is predeceased by his daughter Loret Miller Ruppe, Jr.(Peter Parsons), brothers Joseph B. Ruppe and James A. Ruppe, and parents Peter Edward Ruppe and Antoinette Bosch Ruppe.

A Mass of Christian Burial will take place on Friday, August 28, at 11:30 am at Our Lady of Mercy Church in Potomac, MD. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Catholic Charities.

JOSEPH GAWLER'S SONS, LLC FUNERAL DIRECTORS

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815 Legal Notices

"I, Sajith Morickal Sadasivan Nair R/O Rockville, MD has changed my minor son's name from Aarav Sajith Nair to Aarav S Nair."

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815 Legal Notices

Newspaper Notice

Department of Justice
Antitrust Division

Take notice that the United States has filed proposed Final Judgments in a civil antitrust case in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Iowa, Western Division, *United States of America et.al v. Cal-Maine Foods, Inc. et al*, Civil Action No. 5:26-cv-4060-LTS. On June 29, 2026, the United States filed a Complaint alleging that Cal-Maine Foods, Inc. ("Cal-Maine"); Centrum Valley Holdings, LLC, Versova Holdings, LLC, and Versova Management Cooperative (together, "Versova"); and Hickman's Egg Ranch, Inc. ("Hickman's") engaged in concerted conduct that violated Section 1 of the Sherman Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1. The proposed Final Judgments, filed at the same time as the Complaint, require Cal-Maine, Versova, and Hickman's to refrain from certain communications with their competitors. A Competitive Impact Statement filed by the United States on August 4, 2026 describes the Complaint, the proposed Final Judgments, the industry, and the remedies available to private litigants who may have been injured by the alleged violation.

Copies of the Complaint, proposed Final Judgments, and Competitive Impact Statement are available for inspection on the Antitrust Division's website at <http://www.justice.gov/atr> and at the Office of the Clerk of the United States District Court named above.

Interested persons may address comments in English to Acting Chief, Chicago Office, U.S. Department of Justice, Antitrust Division, Chicago Office, Rookery Building, 209 South LaSalle Street, Ste. 600, Chicago, IL 60604 (email address: ATR.Public-Comments-Tunney-Act-MB@usdoj.gov) within 60 days of the first publication date of this notice. Such comments, including the name of the submitter, and responses thereto will be posted on the Antitrust Division's website, filed with the Court, and, under certain circumstances, published in the *Federal Register*.

815 Legal Notices

Public Notice for OCC Application

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR MERGER OF BANKS

Notice is hereby given that application has been made to the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, 7 Times Square, 10th Floor Mailroom, New York, NY 10036, for consent to merge Old Dominion National Bank ("Old Dominion"), Charlottesville, Virginia 22903 into The National Capital Bank of Washington ("National Capital Bank"), Washington, D.C. 20003. It is contemplated that the main/home offices and branch offices of the above-named banks will continue to operate. This notice is published pursuant to 12 USC 1828(c) and 12 CFR 5. Anyone may submit written comments on this application by August 31, 2026 to: Debbie Burke, Director for Licensing, 7 Times Square, 10th Floor Mailroom, New York, NY 10036 or by emailing LicensingPublicComments@occ.treas.gov. Requests for a copy of the public file on the application should be made to the Director for Licensing 7 Times Square, 10th Floor Mailroom, New York, NY 10036 or by emailing Licensing@occ.treas.gov.

August 1, 2026

Old Dominion National Bank, Charlottesville, Virginia
The National Capital Bank of Washington, Washington, D.C.

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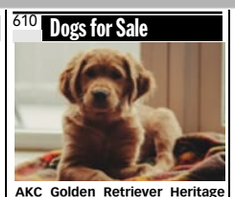
610 Dogs for Sale



AKC Golden Retriever Heritage Puppies Ready to go - 20% DISCOUNT if picked up by August 7-9! $2,500 - 6 boys / 1 girl
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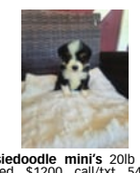

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610 Dogs for Sale

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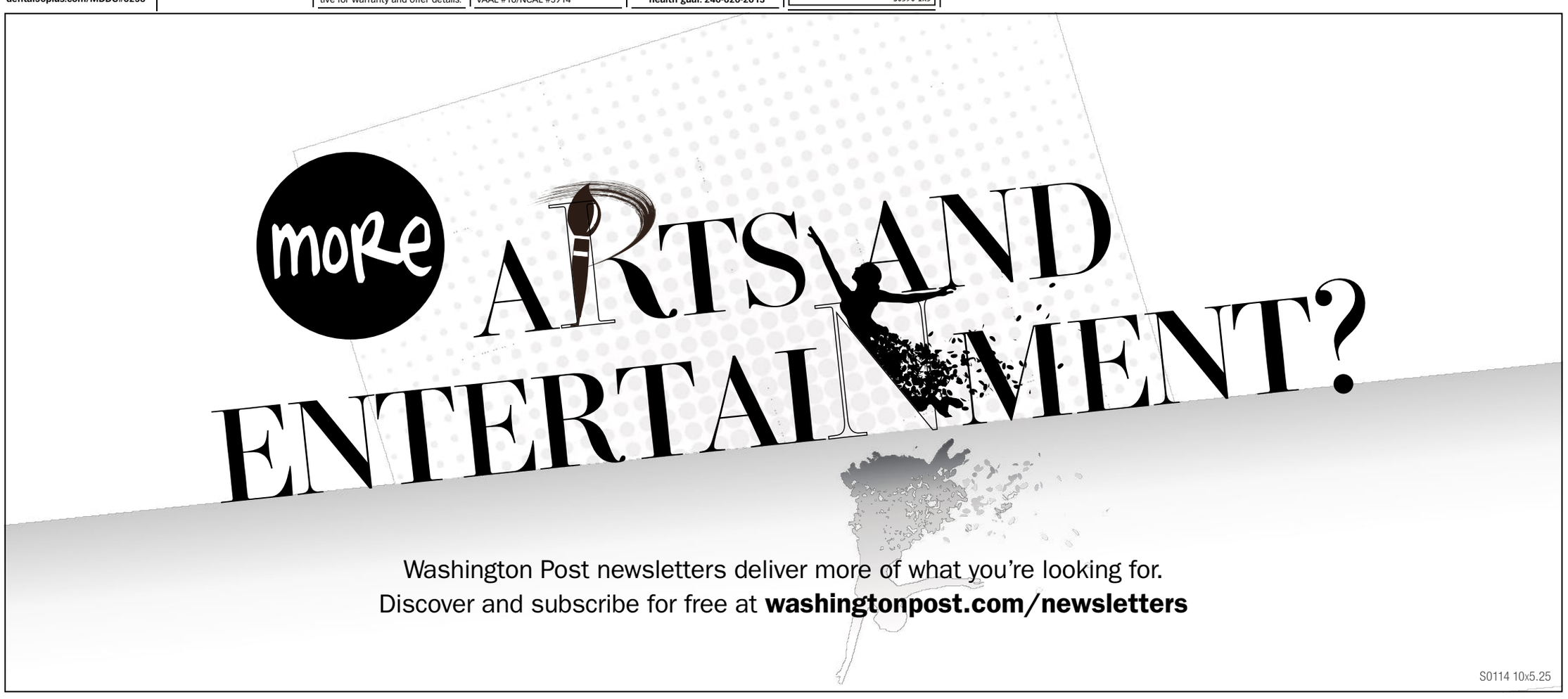


THE WEATHER

WASHINGTONPOST.COM/WEATHER

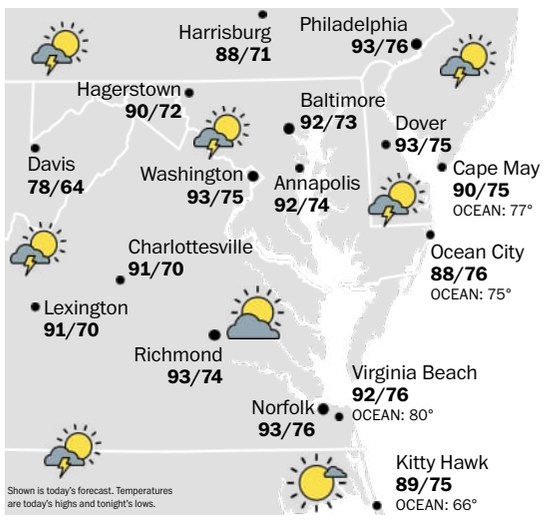
Possible showers, storms

We'll have mostly sunny skies today, and there's a possibility we'll see showers and thunderstorms, too. High temperatures will be in the 90s. In the evening, it will be partly cloudy and the chance of showers and thunderstorms continues. Low temperatures will be in the 70s.

AccuWeather FORECAST

Today	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
T-storm	Mostly sunny, hot	Partly sunny, hot	T-storm possible	T-storm possible	T-storms
93° 75°	**92°** 77°	**94°** 77°	**92°** 76°	**87°** 74°	**89°** 73°
REALFEEL®: **102°**	REALFEEL® **101°**	REALFEEL® **102°**	REALFEEL® **99°**	REALFEEL® **93°**	REALFEEL® **97°**
CHANCE PRECIP: **55%**	CHANCE PRECIP: **25%**	CHANCE PRECIP: **25%**	CHANCE PRECIP: **30%**	CHANCE PRECIP: **30%**	CHANCE PRECIP: **65%**
WIND: **SSW 7–14 mph**	WIND: **W 6–12 mph**	WIND: **WSW 6–12 mph**	WIND: **WSW 8–16 mph**	WIND: **WNW 7–14 mph**	WIND: **WNW 6–12 mph**
HUMIDITY: **High**	HUMIDITY: **High**	HUMIDITY: **High**	HUMIDITY: **High**	HUMIDITY: **High**	HUMIDITY: **High**

REGION TODAY



Pollen: High
Observed ratings on 8/7

Grass	Low
Trees	Absent
Weeds	Low
Mold	High

Today's Air Quality & UV forecast

Air Quality: Good
Main pollutant: Ozone

UV: Very High
9 out of 11+

Blue Ridge: *Shenandoah National Park:* Today, very warm, a thunderstorm. High 88. Winds west–southwest 6–12 mph. Tonight, a thunderstorm in spots. Low 68. • *Great Smoky Mtns. National Park:* Today, not as warm, a couple of showers, a thunderstorm. High 73. Winds southwest 4–8 mph. Tonight, clearing, a thunderstorm in spots.

Atlantic beaches: *Ocean City, MD:* Today, partly sunny, very warm, very humid. High 88. Winds south–southwest 7–14 mph. Tonight, mostly cloudy, warm, very humid. • *Virginia Beach:* Today, mostly sunny, hot, humid. High 92. Winds southwest 8–16 mph. Tonight, partly cloudy. Low 76. Winds south–southwest 8–16 mph.

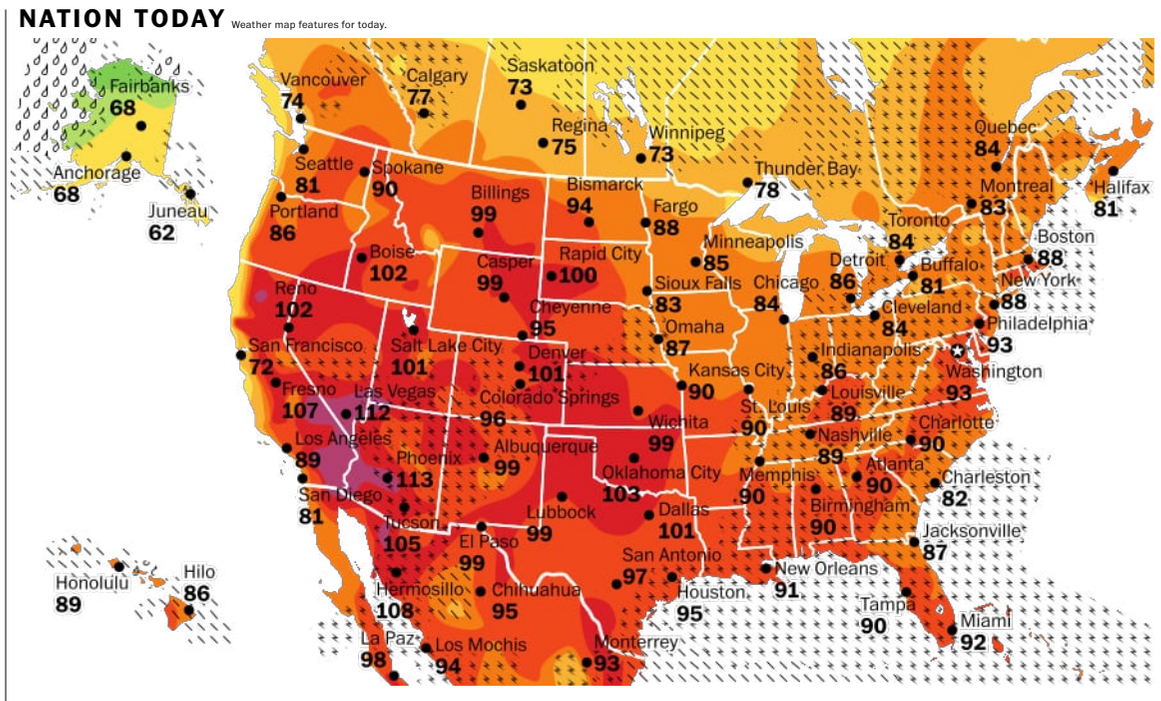
Waterways: *Upper Potomac River*: Today, partly sunny, a thunderstorm around in the afternoon. Wind southwest 6–12 knots. Waves 0–1 foot. • *Lower Potomac and Chesapeake Bay*: Today, a thunderstorm in late afternoon. Wind south 7–14 knots. Waves 1–2 feet on the Lower Potomac; 2–4 feet on the Chesapeake Bay. • *River Stages*: The stage at Little Falls will be around 2.80 feet today, with no change of 2.80 Sunday. Flood stage at Little Falls is 10 feet.

Today's tides (Shown are High tides in **Bold** and low tides.)

Washington	**3:52 a.m.**	11:41 a.m.	**4:45 p.m.**	11:17 p.m.
Annapolis	**1:49 a.m.**	8:38 a.m.	**12:56 p.m.**	7:25 p.m.
Ocean City	**3:34 a.m.**	9:43 a.m.	**4:23 p.m.**	10:58 p.m.
Norfolk	**5:34 a.m.**	11:38 a.m.	**6:15 p.m.**	none
Point Lookout	5:02 a.m.	**9:18 a.m.**	2:58 p.m.	**10:37 p.m.**

NATION TODAY

Weather map features for today.



Showers	T-storms	Rain	Flurries	Snow	Ice
<–10	–0s	0s	10s	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	70s	80s	90s	100s	110+

Yesterday's National
High: Needles, CA **110°**
Low: Leadville, CO **33°**
For the 48 contiguous states

Yesterday's World
High: Al Asha, Saudi Arabia **122°**
Low: Glen Innes, Australia **17°**
Excludes Antarctica

NATIONAL	Today	Tomorrow
Albany, NY	85/69/t	83/59/sh
Albuquerque	99/71/pc	99/70/t
Anchorage	68/54/c	69/55/pc
Atlanta	90/72/t	92/74/t
Austin	99/75/s	98/78/s
Baltimore	92/73/t	93/71/s
Billings, MT	99/62/pc	95/62/pc
Birmingham	90/73/t	92/75/t
Bismarck, ND	94/56/pc	85/56/t
Boise	102/64/pc	99/63/pc
Boston	88/74/t	92/70/pc
Buffalo	81/64/t	80/68/s
Burlington, VT	83/70/t	87/65/c
Charleston, SC	82/75/t	88/77/t
Charleston, WV	85/70/t	87/68/pc
Charlotte	90/72/t	90/73/t
Cheyenne, WY	95/63/pc	91/63/pc
Chicago	84/66/s	84/72/t
Cincinnati	86/69/t	88/71/pc
Cleveland	84/65/t	85/70/pc
Dallas	101/79/s	100/79/s
Denver	101/70/pc	99/67/pc
Des Moines	83/71/pc	89/71/t
Detroit	86/61/t	85/69/pc
El Paso	99/75/s	101/76/s
Fairbanks, AK	68/50/c	71/52/c
Fargo, ND	88/58/pc	83/55/pc
Hartford, CT	88/70/t	88/61/s
Honolulu	89/77/sh	89/77/sh
Houston	95/77/t	92/76/t
Indianapolis	86/69/t	86/73/pc
Jackson, MS	93/73/t	94/73/t
Jacksonville, FL	87/75/t	91/75/t
Kansas City, MO	90/75/s	95/77/s
Las Vegas	112/90/s	113/88/t
Little Rock	92/74/pc	96/75/t
Los Angeles	89/69/s	89/71/s
Louisville	89/72/t	90/75/s
Memphis	90/75/t	91/77/t
Miami	92/81/t	92/80/t
Milwaukee	81/66/pc	79/70/t
Minneapolis	85/67/pc	85/66/pc
Nashville	89/74/t	91/72/t
New Orleans	91/77/t	91/79/t
New York City	88/74/t	90/73/s
Norfolk	93/76/s	92/75/t
Oklahoma City	103/73/s	101/75/s
Omaha	87/73/pc	93/71/t
Orlando	92/76/t	94/76/t
Philadelphia	93/76/t	93/73/s
Phoenix	113/91/s	112/90/t
Pittsburgh	84/67/t	86/67/s
Portland, ME	80/67/t	88/64/sh
Portland, OR	86/57/pc	84/57/pc
Providence, RI	88/72/t	90/66/s
Raleigh, NC	92/73/t	94/73/t
Reno, NV	102/69/pc	102/68/s
Richmond	93/74/t	92/73/t
Sacramento	100/63/s	101/61/s
St. Louis	90/75/pc	92/77/pc
St. Thomas, VI	93/82/pc	93/82/t
Salt Lake City	101/78/pc	100/76/pc
San Diego	81/70/pc	79/70/pc
San Francisco	72/59/s	74/57/s
San Juan, PR	91/81/t	90/80/t
Seattle	81/56/pc	79/56/pc
Spokane, WA	90/58/pc	87/59/pc
Syracuse	84/69/t	81/63/pc
Tampa	90/77/t	91/79/t
Wichita	99/76/s	101/77/pc

WORLD	Today	Tomorrow
Addis Ababa	71/56/r	68/55/sh
Amsterdam	78/60/c	85/66/s
Athens	97/81/s	97/80/s
Auckland	57/53/c	59/49/r
Baghdad	117/90/pc	117/89/s
Bangkok	92/81/sh	91/81/r
Beijing	89/69/s	89/66/s
Berlin	76/55/s	90/65/s
Bogota	68/50/r	66/49/r
Brussels	82/55/pc	89/64/s
Buenos Aires	57/42/pc	57/40/s
Cairo	97/76/pc	97/79/pc
Caracas	78/68/r	76/68/r
Copenhagen	72/58/pc	73/61/pc
Dakar	91/82/t	91/81/t
Dublin	75/59/c	70/51/sh
Edinburgh	70/58/c	64/49/sh
Frankfurt	88/62/s	94/66/pc
Geneva	91/63/s	95/64/t
Ham., Bermuda	88/78/s	86/80/pc
Helsinki	69/53/s	71/59/s
Ho Chi Minh City	92/79/r	90/78/r
Hong Kong	95/85/c	98/85/pc
Islamabad	92/77/t	95/80/t
Istanbul	89/76/pc	85/74/sh
Jerusalem	86/70/s	88/71/s
Johannesburg	71/46/s	69/45/pc
Kabul	88/66/pc	89/69/pc
Kingston, Jam.	92/81/t	91/80/s
Kolkata	88/80/r	90/80/r
Kyiv	73/59/t	77/59/s
Lagos	83/76/r	82/76/sh
Lima	78/68/s	75/68/s
Lisbon	86/67/s	83/66/s
London	81/58/pc	89/63/s
Madrid	100/73/s	98/69/s
Manila	85/80/t	86/79/r
Mexico City	73/56/r	73/57/sh
Montreal	83/70/t	82/67/pc
Moscow	77/57/pc	72/53/r
Mumbai	88/81/r	88/81/r
Nairobi	75/57/pc	75/55/pc
New Delhi	90/80/r	94/81/r
Oslo	73/55/pc	69/55/r
Ottawa	84/66/c	83/63/s
Paris	88/64/pc	87/65/pc
Prague	80/56/s	89/62/s
Rio de Janeiro	79/73/s	82/71/s
Riyadh	112/89/pc	114/89/pc
Rome	92/72/s	95/71/s
San Salvador	90/68/r	93/69/s
Santiago	53/37/pc	54/39/pc
Sarajevo	86/61/t	90/59/t
Seoul	98/74/r	93/74/s
Shanghai	95/80/t	84/78/r
Singapore	92/81/c	92/80/pc
Stockholm	70/55/pc	73/57/pc
Sydney	65/48/s	62/57/r
Taipei City	88/80/r	87/82/r
Tehran	93/78/pc	96/80/pc
Tokyo	91/77/s	91/77/pc
Toronto	84/60/t	81/65/s
Vienna	87/59/s	91/65/s
Warsaw	72/53/pc	78/57/s

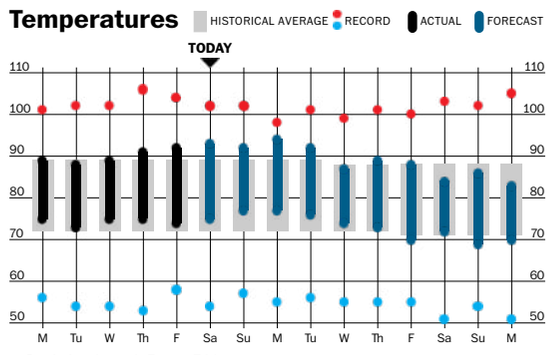
Key: **s**-sunny, **pc**-partly cloudy, **c**-cloudy, **r**-rain, **sh**- showers, **t**-thunderstorms, **sf**-snow flurries, **sn**-snow, **i**-ice

Sources: **AccuWeather.com**; US Army Centralized Allergen Extract Lab (pollen data); airnow.gov (air quality data); National Weather Service

* AccuWeather's **RealFeel Temperature®** combines over a dozen factors for an accurate measure of how the conditions really "feel."

OFFICIAL RECORD

Temperatures

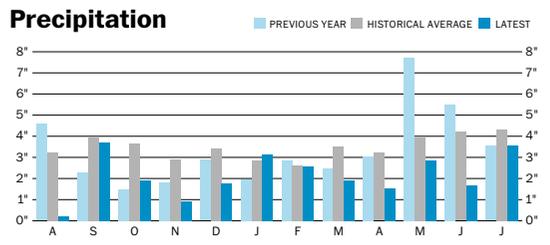


Statistics through 5 p.m. Friday

	National	Dulles	BWI
High	**92°** 12:53 p.m.	**91°** 2:10 p.m.	**93°** 2:02 p.m.
Low	**74°** 5:19 a.m.	**69°** 5:48 a.m.	**72°** 5:37 a.m.
Historical Average	89°/72°	87°/66°	87°/67°
Record high	104° 1918	97° 2007	105° 1918
Record low	58° 2004	49° 1994	53° 2004

Difference from 30–yr. avg. (National): this month: **+0.9°** yr. to date: **+0.3°**

Precipitation



	National	Dulles	BWI
Past 24 hours	0.03"	0.36"	Trace
Total this month	2.27"	1.36"	2.39"
Historical Average (month)	0.79"	0.84"	1.01"
Total this year	19.56"	25.91"	23.16"
Historical Average (year)	25.45"	26.53"	26.70"

Moon Phases

Aug 12	Aug 19	Aug 28	Sep 4
New	First Quarter	Full	Last Quarter

Solar system

	Rise	Set
Sun	6:15 a.m.	8:12 p.m.
Moon	1:08 a.m.	5:09 p.m.
Venus	10:07 a.m.	10:03 p.m.
Mars	2:25 a.m.	5:18 p.m.
Jupiter	5:38 a.m.	7:50 p.m.
Saturn	10:44 p.m.	11:12 a.m.

KEVIN LAMARQUE/REUTERS

Circling back

A museum guard walks past Circle I, Circle II and Circle III — a trio of painted steel works created in 1962 by abstract sculptor David Smith — at the National Gallery of Art in Washington on Friday.

The Guide to Offers
The Washington Post

Enter for the chance to win a pair of tickets to Eagles of Death Metal

Get ready for an unforgettable night of high-octane rock as Eagles of Death Metal take the stage! Formed in 1998 by best friends Jesse Hughes and Joshua Homme in Palm Desert, California, the band has built a reputation for delivering electrifying live performances packed with energy and attitude. Joining the bill is Mountain Head, whose dynamic sound fuses psych-rock, alternative rock, and jangly indie influences into a bold, unforgettable experience. Don't miss your chance to experience one of rock's most entertaining live acts!

See details at washingtonpost.com/entertainment/events/lists/388